FREE INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MOLDOVA

ECOSOEN

ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL

YEAR 7, ISSUE 1

CHIȘINĂU

UNIVERSITATEA LIBERĂ INTERNAȚIONALĂ DIN MOLDOVA

ECOSOEN

ȘTIINȚE ECONOMICE ȘI SOCIALE

REVISTĂ ȘTIINȚIFICĂ

ANUL 7, NR. 1

CHIȘINĂU

Printed version / Versiunea tipărită ISSN 2587-344X
Electronic version / Versiunea electronică E-ISSN 2587-425X
Scientific Journal / *Revistă ştiinţifică*
Free International University of Moldova / *Universitatea Liberă Internaţională din Moldova*

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE / *COMITETUL DE REDACŢIE*

Editor publisher/ *Director publicaţie:*
GALBEN Ilian, *PhD, associate professor, Rector, Free International University of Moldova*

Executive Editors / *Redactori executivi:*
RUSNAC Svetlana, *PhD, associate professor, Dean of the Faculty of Social and Educational Sciences, Free International University of Moldova,* **ROBU Elena,** *PhD, associate professor, Director of the Doctoral School, Free International University of Moldova,* **BALAN Igor,** *PhD, associate professor, Dean of the Faculty of Economic Sciences, Free International University of Moldova,* **BLAGORAZUMNAIA Olga,** *PhD, associate professor, Free International University of Moldova.*

Editorial Board / *Colegiul de redacţie:*
ARMITAGE Jack, *PhD., Professor, Department of Accounting,University of Nebraska* **(USA)**, **ASIEIEVA Yuliia**, *Doctor of Psychological Sciences, associate professor, Department of Language, Psychological and Pedagogical Training of Odessa National Economic University* **(Ukraine), BÁLINT Ágnes**, *PhD., University of Pécs,* **(Hungary), BURLACU Natalia**, *PhD, professor,* **CAUNENCO Irina**, *PhD, associate professor, Free International University of Moldova,* **CHERNENKO Natalia**, *Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, university professor, South Ukrainian National Pedagogical University named after K. D. Ushynsky, Odessa* (**Ukraine**), **CIOBANU Ceslav**, *PhD., ex-Ambassador of Moldova to the USA, Coordinator of Economic Programs, Virginia State University* **(USA)**, **EVSIUKOVA Raisa,** *PhD, associate professor, Free International University of Moldova,* **GRIBINCEA Alexandru**, *PhD, professor, Free International University of Moldova,* **HARAZ Svetlana,** *PhD, Faculty of Social and Educational Sciences, Free International University of Moldova,* **IONIŢĂ Veaceslav**, *PhD, associate professor,* **KAVUN Sergii,** *Dr hab. (economic sciences), professor, Kharkiv University of Technology «STEP»* (**Ukraine**), **KLIMENKO Irina**, *PhD, Academician of the International Academy of Informatization, FSAEI of HPE "North Caucasus Federal University"* **(Russia)**, **KREINDLER Michael I.**, *PhD., Karmiel College* **(Israel)**, **KRZYSZKOWSKI Jerzy**, *PhD., Nicolaus Copernicus University of Torun* (**Poland**), **LEAHU Tudor**, *PhD, associate professor, Free International University of Moldova,* **MIŞCOI Gheorghe**, *Academician, PhD., Professor, Free International University of Moldova,* **MOLDOVAN Vadim**, *PhD., York College of the City University of New York* (**USA**), **MURPHY Frances L.**, *PhD., Estern Illinois University* **(USA)**, **OHRIMENCO Serghei**, *PhD., Professor, Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova,* **PIVORIENE Jolanta**, *PhD., Mykolas Romeris University* (**Lithuania**), **RASA Subačienė**, *PhD.,Vilnius University* **(Lithuania)**, **REDLICH Alexander**, *PhD., University of Hamburg, Institute for Psychology* (**Germany**), **ROBU Viorel**, *PhD, „Vasile Alecsandri" University of Bacau (**Romania**),* **ROŞCA Petru**, *PhD., Professor, Free International University of Moldova,* **SANDU Antonio**, *PhD., Professor, Stefan cel Mare University of Suceava, president of the LUMEN Association* (**Romania**), **SENKO Elena,** *Doctor of Economic Sciences, Professor, National University "Odessa Maritime Academy"* (**Ukraine**), **ŞIŞIANU Sergiu**, *PhD., Professor, Free International University of Moldova,,* **SPÎNU Ana**, *PhD, associate professor, Free International University of Moldova,* **STEVENS Kevin**, *PhD., Director of the School of Accountancy and Management Information Systems, DePaul University* **(USA)**, **STRATAN Alexandru**, *PhD., Professor, Rector, Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova,* **TURLIUC Maria Nicoleta**, *PhD, professor, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iaşi* (**Romania**), **VASIUTYNSKYI Vadym,** *PsyD. (doctor habilitat of psychological sciences), professor, Institute for Social and Political Psychology, NAES of Ukraine (**Ukraine**).*

Editors / *Redactori:*
MELENTIEVA Aliona, *PhD, Faculty of Social and Educational Sciences, Free International University of Moldova*

The volume was recommended for publishing by the Senate of Free International University of Moldova
(Verbal process No1, June, 25, 2025)
The scientific articles are reviewed
Volumul a fost recomandat spre publicare de Senatul ULIM (Proces-verbal nr.11 din 25 iunie 2025)
Articolele ştiinţifice sunt recenzate

ULIM, EcoSoEn, Year 7, Issue 1 / Anul 7, Nr.1
Tiraj 100 ex. / Edition 100 copies
© ULIM

ADDRESS OF REDACTION/ ADRESA REDACŢIEI:
52 Vlaicu Parcalab street, Chisinau, MD-2012, Republic of Moldova, ULIM
E-mail: ecosoen.ulim@gmail.com
Web sait https://ecosoen.ulim.md/

The scientific journal is indexed in the following international databases / Revista ştiinţifică este indexată în următoarele baze de date internaţionale: *IBN, CEEOL, DOAJ, INDEX COPERNICUS, Munich Personal RePEc Archive (MPRA), Academia.edu*

CONTENT

CUPRINS

https://doi.org/10.54481/ecosoen.2025.1

I. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

I. ȘTIINȚE ECONOMICE ȘI SOCIALE

1.1. ECONOMICS SCIENCES

1.1. ȘTIINȚE ECONOMICE

Roshka Petru **4**

Research – Innovation as Factors in Economic Development

Poddar Avijit, Robu Elena **16**

Sustainable Development and Strategic Management: Integrating ESG Principles into Corporate Strategy

Blagorazumnaya Olga, Israeli Milana **26**

Managing Innovation and Creativity of Staff in the Organization

Robu Elena **38**

Strategic Marketing Transformation in the Age of Artificial Intelligence: Tools, Trends, and Organizational Adaptation

Sirota Julia, Khalaila Jomana **49**

Impact of Swords of Iron War on Israeli Economy

1.2. SOCIAL SCIENCES

1.2. ȘTIINȚE SOCIALE

Chernenko Nataliia, Brynza Iryna **58**

Peculiarities of Psychological and Pedagogical Support for Children with Special Needs

Kikinezhdi Oksana, Vasylkevych Yaroslava, Ryk Hanna **74**

Tolerance as a Resource for Socio-Psychological Adaptation of the Individual in Conditions of Uncertainty

Ciuladiene Grazina, Pivoriene Jolanta, Zemaitaitiene Gintare **83**

Advancing Communication between Local Authorities and Citizens: a Mediating Role of Universities

Leino Mare **92**

The Background of Pisa Research and a Social Pedagogical Approach

Rusnac Svetlana **102**

From Baby Boomers to Generation Z: A Psychosocial Intergenerational Analysis of Happiness

I. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
I. ȘTIINȚE ECONOMICE ȘI SOCIALE

1.1. ECONOMICS SCIENCES
1.1. ȘTIINȚE ECONOMICE

UDC: 330.354
JEL Classification: O32, R58
https://doi.org/10.54481/ecosoen.2025.1.01

RESEARCH – INNOVATION AS FACTORS IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

CERCETAREA – INOVAREA CA FACTORI IN DEZVOLTAREA ECONOMICA

ROSHKA Petru, Habilitated Doctor in Economic Sciences, University Professor,
Free International University of Moldova, Faculty of Economic Sciences,
Chisinau, Republic of Moldova
ROR: https://ror.org/054jx1t36
Institutional E-mail: ulim@ulim.md
ORCID: 0009-0000-5300-7394
Personal E-mail: petrurosca@ulim.md

ROȘCA Petru, Doctor habilitat în științe economice, Profesor universitar,
Universitatea Liberă Internațională din Moldova, Facultatea Științe Economice,
Chisinau, Republica Moldova
ROR: https://ror.org/054jx1t36
E-mail Institutional: ulim@ulim.md
ORCID: 0009-0000-5300-7394
E-mail personal: petrurosca@ulim.md

Annotation: *The paper studies the main categories of scientific research and innovation; the connection of research with other fields; makes an analysis of the real situation in the given field; highlights a series of measures that contribute to improving the organizational framework and the relations between the research-innovation activity; appropriate stimulation of research staff; capitalization of research topics of great importance for the economy; the effectiveness of scientific research results. The stages (phases) of the transfer of technological innovations to the enterprise are characterized: recognition of an opportunity; formulation of an idea, constitution of a concept; solution of technical and market problems; realization of the prototype; commercial development; homologation and/or generalization of technology; and the factors on which the level of technological innovation of a product depends: factors related to industrial policy; factors that differentiate the market and environmental conditions, etc. studied the experience of American and Japanese companies on ways to obtain low costs in the process of product innovation.*

Adnotare: *În lucrare sunt studiate principalele categorii de cercetare științifică și inovare; legătura cercetării cu alte domenii; se face o analiză a situației reale din domeniul dat; sunt evidențiate o serie de măsuri ce contribuie la îmbunătățirea cadrului organizațional și a relațiilor dintre activitatea de cercetare-inovare; stimularea corespunzătoare a personalului de cercetare; valorificarea unor teme de cercetare de mare importanță pentru economie; eficiența rezultatelor cercetării științifice. Sunt caracterizate etapele (fazele) tranversării inovațiilor tehnologice la întreprindere: recunoaşterea unei oportunităţi; formularea unei idei, constituirea unui concept; rezolvarea unor probleme tehnice şi de piaţă; realizarea prototipului; dezvoltarea comercială; omologarea şi/sau generalizarea tehnologie; și factorii de care depinde nivelul inovării tehnologice a unui produs: factori legați de politica industrial; factori care difinesc piața și condițiile*

de mediu etc. Este studiată experiența firmelor americane şi a celor japoneze privind modalităţile de obţinere a costurilor scăzute în procesul de inovare a unui produs.

Keywords: *research, innovation, innovation potential, evaluation of research and innovation projects, reducing costs and increasing their efficiency, competitiveness of products and services, etc.*

Cuvinte cheie: *cercetare, inovare, potențial de inovare, evaluarea proiectelor de cercetare și inovare, reducerea costurilor și creșterea eficienței acestora, competitivitatea produselor și serviciilor etc.*

Conflict of interest
The author declares that there is no conflict of interest
Article received: 12.05.2025
Accepted for publication: 06.06.2025
Published: 27.06.2025

Conflict de interese
Autorul declară că nu are niciun conflict de interese.
Articol primit: 12.05.2025
Acceptat pentru publicare: 06.06.2025
Publicat: 27.06.2025

© Roshka Petru, 2025

Introduction

The accelerated advancement of technical and scientific progress (TSP) represents an issue of paramount importance in contemporary economic development. It serves as the essential foundation for sustaining the continuous growth of the economy, enhancing its overall efficiency, improving production quality, and better meeting the evolving needs of the population. TSP exerts a positive and far-reaching influence on all components of the production process. According to calculations conducted by specialists in the field, approximately three-quarters of labor productivity growth can be attributed to the adoption and implementation of scientific discoveries and technological innovations (Roșca, 2024).

Moreover, technical progress has significantly reduced the costs associated with the production, movement, and exchange of goods, services, and information. This development has facilitated the proximity of economic resources to target markets and enabled the establishment of complex information networks connecting firms across different geographic regions. As a result, it has allowed for more effective centralized coordination and control of international business operations. Conversely, the substantial increase in research and development (R&D) expenditures has had a notable impact on the global innovation process, contributing to a wider dissemination and application of its outcomes across various sectors of the economy (Nurpeisova, 2020). Innovation is the muscle and blood of modern business. This study is important for entrepreneurs who wish to familiarize themselves with the most creative and innovative projects and business ideas for their practical application.

Materials and methods of research

This study employed a mixed-methods research design combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches. data sources included academic journals, government reports, and international economic databases. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis to identify relationships between research activity, innovation levels, and economic indicators. Qualitative data from interviews were thematically analyzed to capture expert insights and contextual factors influencing innovation-driven growth.

Innovation research typically follows a structured sequence of stages that guide the process of investigating how new ideas, products, or processes are created, implemented, and impact economic or social systems. The first stage is problem identification and goal setting, where researchers define the objectives of the study and identify gaps or challenges in existing knowledge or practice. The second stage involves a literature review and theoretical framework development, analyzing existing studies, models, and theories to build a foundation for the research. The third stage is data collection, which may include gathering primary data through surveys, interviews, experiments, or case studies,

as well as secondary data from official reports, academic publications, and databases. This is followed by the data analysis stage, where collected information is systematically examined using statistical, qualitative, or mixed methods to identify patterns, relationships, and key findings. In the fifth stage, researchers engage in interpretation of results, comparing them with previous studies and theoretical expectations to draw meaningful conclusions about innovation processes and their effects. The sixth stage involves formulating recommendations and practical applications, suggesting how the findings can be used to improve innovation strategies or inform policy decisions. Finally, the research is documented and disseminated through articles, reports, conferences, or public presentations, ensuring that insights contribute to the wider field of innovation and economic development.

Results and considerations

Scientific research and innovation represent fundamental drivers that contribute to enhancing the economic development of any nation and play a decisive role in enabling enterprises to adapt to global trends and competitive environments. The innovation process involves the continuous introduction of new ideas, technologies, and practices into economic life, transforming them into processes, products, services, or solutions intended for market application. This dynamic activity serves as a catalyst for socio-economic progress by fostering competitiveness, improving productivity, and responding to evolving societal needs. Moreover, innovation facilitates the modernization of industries and strengthens a country's capacity to integrate into the global economic system. The consistent generation and implementation of innovative ideas not only stimulate business growth but also support broader national development objectives. Figure 1 illustrates the main categories of activities associated with research and innovation, highlighting their diverse roles within the innovation ecosystem.

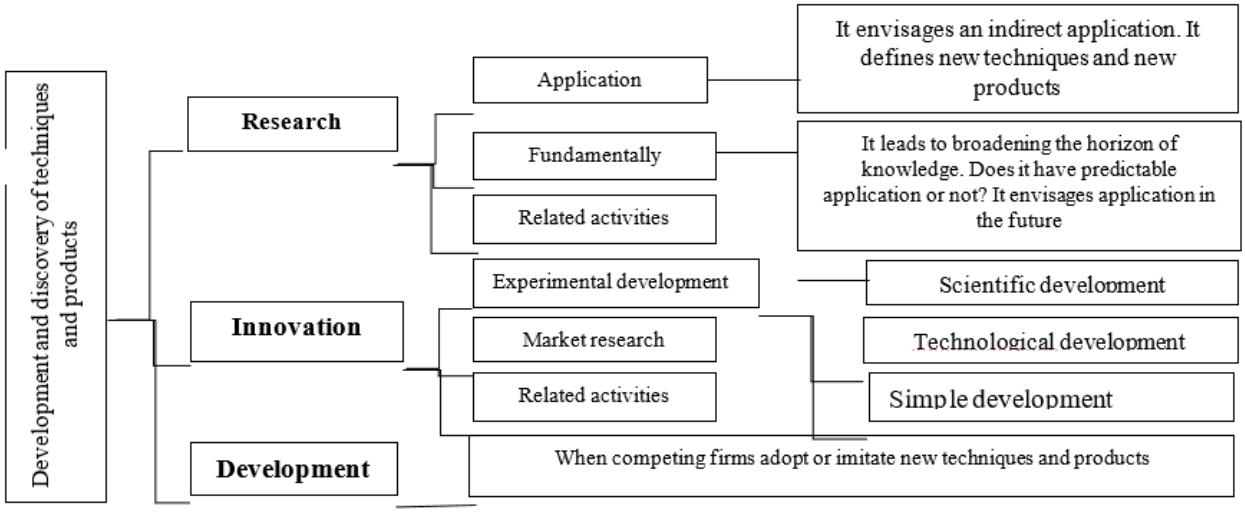

Figure 1. Main research categories

Research and innovation are complex activities and, for this reason, must be analyzed in connection with other areas of economic activity, such as: 1) education and the workforce training system; 2) the theoretical foundations of discoveries; 3) practical and applied solutions; 4) material resources; 5) qualified personnel; 6) material and case-based resources.

The innovative potential of a country is represented by scientific, design and construction institutions, technological, experimental production organizations, experimental polygons, educational institutions, personnel and technical means of these organizations.

In order to properly carry out activities in these areas, there must be an appropriate organizational system that corresponds to the requirements of the economy. In order to improve the

organizational framework and the relations of the scientific research activity with other fields, several solutions are proposed (Roșca, 2008): ensuring the research potential and establishing optimal dimensions for the research units; approaching and capitalizing on research topics of great importance for the economy; making a more concrete link between the research itself and the capitalization of the results; appropriate stimulation of the research staff. research; stronger collaboration with institutes, academies, companies, etc., in other countries; improvement of the information system; stimulating economic agents to carry out research and innovations.

In developed countries, in order to finance new technical-scientific developments, which are sometimes risky projects, innovative funds are created that represent financial resources accumulated based on sponsorship payments to companies or banks. The means of these funds are usually distributed among the applicants who claim to invest, on a competition basis, often in the form of a trend. These and many other measures contribute to the intensification of research and innovation activity, as well as to the more active implementation of research results and their efficiency. The intensive use of natural resources must be oriented towards their minimum consumption. This allows the simultaneous solution of three problems: reducing the need for natural resources; raising quality; increasing labor productivity. Technical-scientific progress must be oriented towards the radical improvement of the use of natural resources, raw materials, materials and energy at all stages – starting with the extraction and processing of raw materials and ending with the manufacture of finished production.

Economic growth is the main objective of macroeconomic strategy. It is assessed by the growth rate of GNP (and/or GDP) in percentage reported per capita (Gürler, 2022). Despite the fact that the increase in production covers only a part of the effective enrichment of the country, economic growth is a major factor in the health of the economy, ensuring new jobs and increasing the standard of living of the population (Rahman, 2021). A correct management of the research and development activity in collaboration with the research institutions allows the company to develop much more efficient technologies (Dmytryshyn, 2018). At the international level, there is a continuous acceleration of technological changes, shortening the life cycle of new products, which implies a high risk of existing technologies and highlights the importance of an efficient management of the technological innovation process. It is intended to enable the company to develop and use new technologies in order to strengthen its position in the market.

In the specialized literature we find frequent statements related to the reduction of the time elapsed from the appearance of a scientific discovery to the fulfillment of some practical applications of these. For example, if in the case of the photograph the time interval was 112 years (in 1727, the German physicist J.H. Schulze discovered the sensitivity of silver nitrate to light, but, conventionally, it is considered that the appearance of the photograph took place in 1839, when the Frenchman D.F. Arago presented a communication on successful experiments, by Nicephore Niepce and Louis Jacques Daguerre, about 2 years earlier); for the transistor, this interval was 5 years (1948-1953), and for the solar battery, 2 years (1953-1955). Also, the period of appearance of the telephone lasted 56 years (1820-1876); of radio - 35 years (1867-1902); of radar - 15 years (1920-1935); television - 14 years (1922-1936); atomic bomb - 6 years (1939-1945); this interval at the appearance of integrated circuits lasted 3 years (1958-961) etc. Such events highlight the interest of the society to exploit as quickly as possible the results of new discoveries and the constant orientation of technical research towards the materialization of such trends (Roșca, 2017).

Innovation is a specific component of the evolution of human society. In the case of a company, understanding the meaning of the innovation process implies observing quality requirements that are almost continuously changing, knowing the stages that accompany the launch of a new product. In the innovative process, a significant role is played by the engineer, and a good preparation is necessary, in order to cope, in at least acceptable conditions, with the diversity and complexity of the problems that may arise. Any product can be successful if it can withstand

competitiveness on the market, which implies the ability to face competition, therefore to have qualities at least similar to those of the opponents with whom it competes. So, for the company this means manufacturing a product whose properties correspond to the customer's requirements as much as possible, a product that is agreed by the customers, in the race to gain their trust.

Researchers and specialists retain the following main directions of action for raising the economic efficiency in perspective, most of them being the direct consequence of the pace of scientific and technical discoveries: the design of new technical and technological solutions, as well as the improvement of the existing ones, capable of ensuring the obtaining of superior products in terms of quality, operating life and safety in operation, but also with a low consumption of raw materials; the creation of new materials and substitutes to replace the expensive and deficient ones in the country's economy; the design of new techniques and technologies based on new principles and, implicitly, the modification of industrial production processes.

From many points of view, the production of machines, based on mechanical principles, has exhausted its possibilities, biotechnologies proving to be more appropriate to present and future conditions; the organization of new technological flows, characterized by low consumption of raw materials. Most of the opinions converge towards the design, in the sectors where they are suitable, of active circular processes; the increase of the role of creativity, respectively the formation of a mass attitude favorable to ensuring the organic link between research-education-production, between research-design-production. Normally, in order to obtain the expected economic and social effects from investments in scientific and technical research, adequate organizational measures are also needed, which contribute to shortening the research-production cycle as much as possible; achieving an optimal ratio between short-term and long-term effects in the management and economic-social organization as a whole and assessing the efficiency of activities in particular.

Activities in the field of research and assimilation of new products, technological processes or production processes consume human and material efforts (funds), becoming particularly economically and technically efficient only after application in practice. As such, the time of social actions, especially that of the activity of leadership and organization, is not homogeneous and linear, but has a contradictory character, reflected in the qualitative differences between the "short term" and the "long term" of human activity. Within the short term, a series of disturbances may occur which, if not known and corrected in time, lead to the departure from the proposed objectives.

As a rule, in empirical management, the concern for the current activity (the short term) prevails over the perspective (the long term), the pursuit only of short-term profitability generating losses in a longer perspective. For these reasons, it is possible to achieve real efficiency in the future only if action is taken to increase the productivity of labor and the quality of execution, to extend the service life of the products; improving the structure of the economy, in the sense of orienting the industry towards the branches that allow the highest yields: electronics, automation, computer technology, computer science, fine mechanics, fields with positive effects on the increase of labor productivity in agriculture, on social life as a whole.

The impact of the technical-scientific revolution on the economic and social evolution, as well as the orientation of industry towards cutting-edge technologies, have generated some new laws: development and efficient economic growth is a direct function of the efforts made in the field of research; the more diversified an economy is, the more its upward evolution depends on the level of research and development activity. According to specialists in the field, there are three groups of factors that contribute to increasing competitiveness: innovative factors in the narrow sense or innovation of processes and products (Filipova, 2018), which hold a share of about 45% of the factors that ensure the performance of competitiveness; innovative factors in the broad sense, which are not directly dependent on technological changes, but are of a managerial organizational nature and have a share of about 29.4%.

These are: a) various innovations at the level of the company; b) some product innovations of a technological nature (for example, building a company's own style); c) innovations in the organization of production, other than those regarding technology); d) innovations in production management methods; other factors, not included in the aforementioned groups, which account for about 25.5%. This refers to: the existence of knowledge on the market situation; the availabilities offered by efficient and properly located distribution networks; the existence of human capital; financial capital; the cost of loans; unit labor cost; socio-political context; a growing economy; public policy; tariff regime, etc.

A good example in this context is demonstrated by the European Union. In March 2000, at the Extraordinary European Council in Lisbon, it was set as a fundamental objective for the Union to become the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010, capable of ensuring sustainable growth and development. In order to achieve this objective, the strategy proposed increasing investments in education and research. In 2002, at the Barcelona European Council, which also aimed to identify progress towards the Lisbon objective, the objective was set to increase investment in research and development from around 1.9% of GDP to 3%, of which 2% should come from the private sector. At the European Council meeting in Brussels in March 2008, a new cycle of the renewed Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs was launched, referring to the importance of investment in knowledge and innovation as a key driver for economic growth (Galben, 2018). These goals have been priorities in the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy as well as the Europe 2030 Sustainable Development Strategy (Comosia Europeană, 2019).

For this purpose, some active countries use Euro credits. Although the objective of Euro credits can be different: to finance the balance of payments deficit, to finance significant projects, to financially supplement a credit for international trade. The use of Euro credits as financial credits to complement an export credit aims, concretely, at financing the accounts granted to suppliers by buyers, according to the contract, financing the payment of interest for the period of disbursements or the first installments to be repaid, financing local expenses related to the objective contracted through credits, etc. Apart from these three objectives, Euroloans can be used as collateral for a credit line or for the renegotiation of previous loans. In the first case, they cannot be used, because their only role is to serve as a guarantee (security) for other forms of financing. In the second case, Euroloans are used to renegotiate older debts in the event of the debtor's monetary insolvency or to renegotiate in order for the debtor to obtain more favorable conditions.

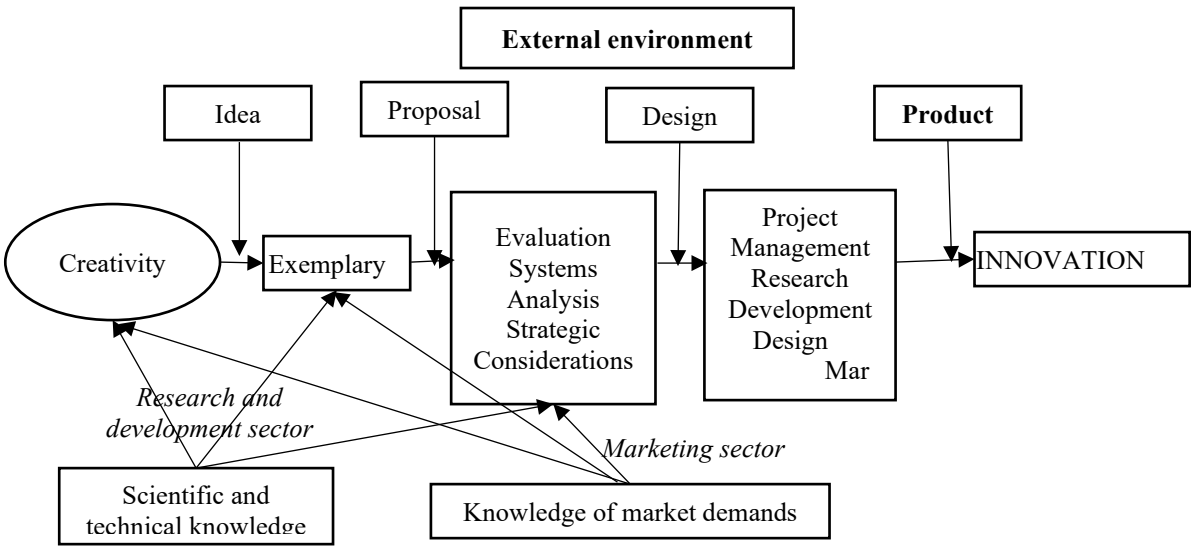

Figure 2. Development of an innovative action

The innovation process, as a rule, is mediated by the analysis of the processes of specialization and concentration, cooperation and integration, by the maximum use of the best scientific

consistencies and experimental design works, by the exchange, extension and distribution of knowledge, the degree of centralization of the economic, production and socio-economic functions, etc. (Diebolt, 2019). In other words, as the basis of the process of integration into the innovation sphere, totally different and qualitatively progressive economic categories and phenomena are accepted. With all the value and depth of the scientific argumentation of such positions, we consider that each of these points of view illustrates the integrity of the phenomenon examined. The development of an innovation becomes a complex process, the company collects technical-scientific and market information and must react appropriately, offering products that respond more adequately to customer requests (Figure 2).

The process of evolution of a technological innovation in the enterprise, is characterized by the crossing of six stages (phases) with the respective connections, namely: 1) recognition of an opportunity; 2) the formulation of an idea (the constitution of a concept); 3) solving technical and market problems; 4) making the prototype; 5) commercial development; 6) homologation and/or generalization of technology.

The analysis of the innovative activity at the enterprise requires taking into account a multitude of factors on which the level of technological innovation of a product depends and which, at the same time, determine the efficiency of the enterprise. These factors can be grouped as follows (Di Virgilio, 2023): factors intrinsically related to the enterprise (acceptance of innovative manifestations, marketing capacity, manufacturing conditions, internal financial availability, strategic objectives, flexibility of the organizational structure, technological design capacity, concrete objectives that the manager or team of managers proposes, etc.); factors related to industrial policy (the existence of labour factors with adequate qualifications, financial availability outside the enterprise, public demand, the existence of regulations and/or norms in the field, the extent to which the research and development sector is supported, etc.); factors that define the market and environmental conditions (the existence of competition, market demands, suppliers, relations with other enterprises, the existence of a favorable climate for the innovation process). Depending on the presence of the aforementioned factors, four categories of enterprises can be determined: conservative enterprises; stabilized enterprises; open enterprises and overly innovative enterprises. Some characteristics of these categories of enterprises can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of enterprises in terms of attitude adopted against an innovative process

Feature	Type of enterprise			
	Conservative	Stabilized	Open	Exaggeratedly innovative
Structure	Bureaucratic	Partly bureaucratic	Partly bureaucratic	De tip colegial
Driving mode	Closed for news	Lacking enthusiasm for novelties	Accepting the news	Support for the introduction of novelties
Efficiency	Reduced	Medium	High	Medium or low
General behavior	Hostile to novelty, slow innovation	Easily adapts to new developments leading to safe effects, medium-paced innovation	Acceptance of novelties, innovation at a medium pace	Risk-free adoption of novelties, intense innovation

The experience of American and Japanese companies regarding the ways to obtain low costs in the process of innovating a product that can be briefly characterized on the basis of certain data as such is of interest. In the American example, the interests of customers ("our customer – our master")

are mainly taken into account, and in Japan the focus is primarily on the manufacturer's requirements. If in the USA innovation is preferentially aimed at products and reducing costs, in Japan the degree of available employment is not neglected, the latter problem being considered as an aspect of national importance. In the USA, the management conditions of companies – existing in the conditions of a diffuse shareholding – have as their main objective the obtaining of profit in the shortest possible time and the increase, as such, of the value of the shares; in Japan such a concern is considered secondary. In the promotion of new products, a prior evaluation of the quality level can prove its effectiveness, knowing that a customer is willing to buy a product when the quality/price ratio falls within certain limits, which implicitly implies the acceptance of the product, a certain reliability (Mohamed, 2022).

Before moving on to the materialization of an innovation, especially when it has a certain scope, it is necessary to evaluate the consequences it will generate. In the literature, it is recommended to apply the following criteria for evaluating technological progress: the time in which the extension of a new technology occurs in a certain industrial sector; the replacement period, i.e. the time interval in which the replacement of a product or process with a new one is practically recorded. Conventionally, the replacement time corresponds to the time interval in which a technology or a product register, in a certain field, an increase in the market from a share of 10% to 90%. For example, the duration of replacing natural rubber with synthetic rubber was 58 years, while for electronic computers or for some software products this duration reached 1,5 ... 3 years, etc. (Roșca, 2008).

Frequency of introduction of technological innovations (e.g. number of innovative actions completed within one year); the time interval elapsed between the moment of the appearance of an investment and that of the commercialization of a product based on that invention. It is well known that not every patented or patentable invention is a generator of commercial success. Specialists admit that only 5–10% of registered inventions actually lead to the emergence of successful products or technologies; imitation time, i.e. the time interval in which, after the appearance of a new product, products with similar characteristics appear on the market. Taking into account the development of adoption, entrepreneurs can be classified into 5 groups: the group of innovators, the group of first followers, the group of the majority in anticipation, the group of the majority in delay, the group of entrepreneurs who are late in adopting a technological novelty.

Technological innovation is oriented towards the discovery of products that will successfully enter commercial competition, so that the enterprise maintains or improves its position on the market. The design of such processes is characterized by a high degree of uncertainty and implicitly a higher or lower risk. That is why project selection is one of the most difficult decisions involved in R&D management. The criteria to be taken into account must allow the detection of those qualities of information on the basis of which the decision to choose the most viable projects can be made, because the abandonment of a certain project must also be decided on the basis of almost identical factors. The following criteria can be used in the evaluation of innovation projects by entering them in the so-called weighted checklists (Roșca, 2024).

In order to assess the efficiency of technological projects with a high degree of probability, all aspects necessary to be able to form a clear vision of the real possibilities of the enterprise to successfully carry out the technological innovation project must be taken into account. That is why the block of analysis criteria contains aspects related to technical possibilities, commercial possibilities, financial capacity, production capacity, research structure and institutional aspects, such as the tradition of the enterprise and its attitude in developing new products and, of course, the risks it is willing to assume.

The use of qualitative analysis (very good, good, satisfactory, poor and very poor) may be sufficient to define the correspondence of projects from the point of view of one criterion or another, without the need to resort to complicated quantitative methods that do not allow the determination of weaknesses and the actions to be taken to eliminate them. The method is based on establishing a

numerical correspondence of qualitative criteria. As in the technique of imposed decision, the criteria must be ordered in order of their importance. A first way of ordering the criteria is the overall assessment, giving each criterion scores on a scale from 0 to ten (0 being awarded for the criterion that is considered to have no influence on the development of the project, and 10 is awarded to the project that has a very special relevance on the project in question). The second method, more rigorous, and therefore more precise, consists in determining the coefficients of importance: the criteria are compared with each other, two by two, obtaining a D number of decisions. Thus, a score of "1" (one) and "0" (zero) is awarded respectively, if one criterion is considered more important than the other, and a score of "0.5" is given to both criteria, if they are of equal importance. The methodology for calculating the various decisions on the innovative project is exposed in the literature (Samanlioglu, 2020).

In carrying out the innovative activity, it is necessary to know the factors that can increase efficiency or, on the contrary, lead to a reduction in profitability, by taking various organizational, technological, economic-financial or other measures in time. In the opinion of specialists in the field, these factors can be included in one of the following two groups: internal or endogenous factors, intrinsically linked to the innovative person (this group includes biological factors – genetic potential, memory capacity, age, health status, etc., predominantly psychological factors – imaginative qualities, aptitudes, temperamental traits, volitional qualities, motivation, curiosity, level of involvement in innovative activities, etc., factors of a cognitive-intellectual nature – specialized intellectual qualities, level of education, gnoseological factors, spirit of observation, discernment, etc.); individual external factors (exogenous), among which we will mention the socio-economic factors – school (Roshka, 2022), material condition, technical and informational endowment of the workplace (Railean, 2022), the climate within the micro group, the existence of a technical creation group, the socio-economic requirement, the stage of development of technology, the social climate, etc. There are enough cases in which chance was at the origin of the revelation of unexpected solutions, of some quite remarkable discoveries (Roșca, 2017).

One of the main negative factors influencing the development of research-innovation activity in the Republic of Moldova is the lack of financial resources needed for the given domain (Duca, 2017), (Sorochin, 2020). For example, according to the National Program in the fields of research and innovation for 2020-2023 (Hotărârea Guvernului, 2019), in the Republic of Moldova the funding of the research sector (Cujba, 2022) was based on the following priorities: health; sustainable agriculture, food security and safety food; environment and climate change; societal challenges; economic competitiveness and innovative technologies (Vaculovschi, 2022), with a financial effort estimated as follows: for 2020 in the amount of 227.7 mln. lei; 2021 – 238.9 thousand. lei; 2022 – 257.9 mil. lei and for 2023 in a volume of 276.3 mln. lei (Railean, 2024).

Any company will not be willing to concern itself with research and innovation, if certain privileges are not ensured that would allow the exploitation and obtaining benefits compared to the investments allocated and the risk it assumed when it initiated the innovation activity. The identification and use of techniques and methods capable of stimulating the innovation process has been an object of careful concern for researchers and for those interested in exploiting the effects of innovation. Currently, there is a certain amount of knowledge regarding how the identification of new constructive, technological and organizational solutions can be stimulated.

In the opinion of specialists in the field, the following could contribute to favoring the development of innovation processes (Tsinopoulos, 2018): the existence of forecast studies, which would provide the management team with pertinent information on the directions of evolution of the market requirements; the manifestation of favorable situations at the market level, noticed, for example, as a result of close ties with the company's customers; an attitude favorable to innovative processes, manifested by the company's management team, materialized, for example, in the acceptance of solutions or proposals that come from outside specialized services or that have the

ability to make decisions in relation to innovative processes; a rational policy of the enterprise, of concentration and distribution of the forces at its disposal on the directions of innovation of maximum intensity and maximum efficiency; the existence of specialists who have the knowledge and motivations necessary to promote innovative processes; the possibilities to better satisfy the specific requirements of the national market; the reduction of the competitiveness of older products, due, for example, to the increase in the value of the wage component of costs; the possibilities of imitating innovative processes already manifested in other countries.

In the process of innovation at the level of a country, there are some obstacles of an external nature (barriers created or favored by those structures whose position could be threatened by the initiation of a possible innovative process, the difficulties derived from the protection of advanced technological elements by patents or secrets, etc.) or of an internal nature. Among the obstacles likely to be included in the latter group, the following can be mentioned: high absolute costs and pronounced risks; lack of financing possibilities from own sources or high credit costs; the manifestation of effects corresponding to periods of economic depression (limitation of funds oriented towards innovative processes, reduction of demand, increase of risks, etc.); the exaggerated orientation towards perfecting only the processes already in production and which enjoy a certain commercial success; the tendency of the company's management not to assume the risks involved in an innovative process; inadequate policy at national level, in relation to the support of the research and development departments. Along with the above, a special role is played by the motivation (material and moral co-interest) of the persons involved in the research-innovation-development process and many other organizational, technological, economic-social factors, etc.

Conclusions

In order to accelerate the technical-scientific progress and increase the effectiveness of the realization of innovations in the branches of the national economy of the republic, we consider it necessary:

- improvement of the legislative framework in the technical-scientific field that would correspond to the requirements of the market economy and entrepreneurial development;
- creation of technology parks as a new form of territorial integration of science, education and production in the form of associations of scientific institutions, design and construction offices, educational institutions, enterprises, companies;
- the establishment of innovation centers and technopoles;
- reforming the country's scientific-technological system and raising the level of coordination of research in the country's scientific institutions;
- the formation of a system of financial insurance for science, which would include the multiple channels and sources of financing of technical-scientific, design and construction works, financial support from the state for technical-scientific priorities;
- definition of priority directions and allocation of financial means based on free competition;
- harmonization of academic science with branch and university science;
- internationalization of research and development with participation in international programs and grants;
- establishment of mechanisms for technology transfer, extension of knowledge and commercialization of the results of scientific and technological activities;
- creation of the system of selection by competition of state technical-scientific programs, fundamental scientific research programs and applied elaborations;
- focusing the attention of ministries and departments, scientific and design institutions of the republic on solving the problems of applying innovations and their economic effect in production, increasing the technical level of production;

- improvement of the process of training of engineers and economists in the field of forecasting the development of science and technology, appreciating the economic and social effect of the realization of innovations;
- ensuring the obtaining of the most extensive statistical information regarding the development of the technical-scientific progress and obtaining the economic-social effect in the branches of the national economy as a result of the application of new techniques and technologies in production.

The implementation of these and other measures will contribute to accelerating the technical-scientific progress and increasing the effectiveness in the development of the national economy.

Bibliography

1. Comisia Europeană (2019). *Document de reflecţie către o Europă durabilă până în 2030. Bruxelles, COM, 22.* Available at: https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/a47339bc-124c-446b-b286-aa4dc0f6fc90_ro?filename=factsheets_sustainable_europe_012019_ro.pdf [Accessed 04 Mai 2025].
2. Cujba, R. (2022). *The place of innovation in the research-development innovation system of the Republic of Moldova. Competitiveness and sustainable development*. Available at: https://ibn.idsi.md/sites/default/files/imag_file/p-38-43_0.pdf [Accessed 17 Apr. 2025].
3. Di Virgilio, F. et al. (2023). *Innovation factors for high and middle-income countries in the innovation management context. Access to science, business, innovation in the digital economy.* ACCESS Press, 4(3), pp. 434-452. DOI:10.46656/access.2023.4.3(8) [Accessed 20 Apr. 2025].
4. Diebolt, C., & Hippe, R. (2019). *The long-run impact of human capital on innovation and economic development in the regions of Europe. Applied*. Economics, 51(5), 542-563. Available at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00036846.2018.1495820 [Accessed 29 Apr. 2025].
5. Dmytryshyn, L., & Zvarych, O. (2018*). Innovations as a priority factor of the regional economic developmen*t. Baltic Journal of Economic Studies, 4(2), pp. 70-77. Available at: https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/innovations-as-a-priority-factor-of-the-regional-economic-development/viewer [Accessed 12 Apr. 2025].
6. Duca, G. (2017). *Ştiinţa şi inovarea în Republica Moldova: istorie şi actualitate*. Revista de Ştiinţă, Inovare, Cultură şi Artă „Akademos", 44(1), pp. 92-104. Available at: https://ibn.idsi.md/ro/vizualizare_articol/52076 [Accessed 22 Apr. 2025].
7. Filipova, M., & Yuleva, R. (2018). *Innovative management as competitiveness factor*. Entrepreneurship, 6(2), pp. 215-228. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348430515_INNOVATIVE_MANAGEMENT_AS_COMPETITIVENESS_FACTOR [Accessed 23 Apr. 2025].
8. Galben, I., & Roşca, P. (2018). *Inovarea şi cercetarea–factori cheie în sporirea competitivităţii produselor pe piaţa internaţională*. EcoSoEn, 1(4), pp. 16-25. Available at: https://ibn.idsi.md/sites/default/files/imag_file/16-25_0.pdf [Accessed 21 Apr. 2025].
9. Gürler, M. (2022). *Innovation as an accelerating effect on Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita*. The European Journal of Research and Development, 2(3), pp. 26-44. DOI:10.56038/ejrnd.v2i3.105 [Accessed 21 Apr. 2025].
10. Hotărârea Guvernului RM (2019) nr.381 din 01.2008 Cu privire la aprobarea Programului național în domeniile cercetării și inovării pentru anii 2020-2023 și a Planului de acțiuni privind implementarea acestuia. Monitorul Oficial al Republicii Moldova, 2019, nr.256-259. Available at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=115747&lang=ro [Accessed 30 Apr. 2025].
11. Iatchevici, V. (2016). *Dezvoltarea sistemului inovațional din Republica Moldova*. Intellectus, (3), pp. 41-48. Available at: https://ibn.idsi.md/sites/default/files/imag_file/41_48_Dezvoltarea%20sistemul%20inovational%20din%20Republica%20Moldova.pdf [Accessed 20 Apr. 2025].
12. Mohamed, M. M. A., Liu, P., & Nie, G. (2022). *Causality between technological innovation and economic growth: Evidence from the economies of developing countries*. Sustainability, 14(6), pp. 3586-3622. DOI:10.3390/su14063586 [Accessed 25 Apr. 2025].

13. Nurpeisova, A., et al. (2020). *Impact of R&D expenditures on the country's innovative potential: a case study*. Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Issues, 8(2), pp. 682-697. DOI:10.9770/jesi.2020.8.2(41) [Accessed 02 Mai 2025].
14. Rahman, M. M., & Alam, K. (2021). *Exploring the driving factors of economic growth in the world's largest economies*. Heliyon, 7(5), pp. 2-9. Available at: https://www.cell.com/heliyon/pdf/S2405-8440(21)01212-3.pdf [Accessed 28 Apr. 2025].
15. Railean, V. (2024). *Evaluarea și finanțarea sectorului de cercetare din republica moldova în contextul tendințelor europene*. Rezumatul tezei de doctor în științe economice. Chișinău: USM. 35 p.
16. Railean, V. (2022). *Diagnosticarea sectorului de cercetare din Republica Moldova prin prisma statisticii naționale în domeniul resurselor și rezultatelor*. Studia Universitatis Moldaviae (Seria Ştiinţe economice şi ale comunicării), 2(11), pp. 3-13. Available at: https://ibn.idsi.md/sites/default/files/imag_file/1.p.3-13%20%28%C8%99tiin%C8%9Be%20economice%29.pdf [Accessed 22 Apr. 2025].
17. Roşca, P. (2008). *Piaţa internaţională a tehnologiilor*. Analele Universităţii Libere Internaţionale din Moldova, (7), pp. 28-36. Available at: https://ibn.idsi.md/sites/default/files/imag_file/28_36_Piata%20internationala%20a%20tehnologiilor.pdf [Accessed 20 Apr. 2025].
18. Roșca, P. (2024). *Integrarea economică și economia europeană: suport de curs*. Chișinău: Print-Caro. 284 p. ISBN 978-9975-180-55-9.
19. Roșca, P., & Balan, I. (2024). *Economia întreprinderii. Manual*. Chilinău: Print-Caro. 314 p. ISBN 978-9975-180-71-9.
20. Roşca, P., Gribincea, A. (2017). *Cercetarea şi inovarea: factori-cheie în sporirea competitivităţii produselor moldoveneşti pe piaţa internaţională*. Statalitatea Moldovei: continuitatea istorică şi perspectiva dezvoltării, 24-25 martie 2017, Chişinău. Chişinău: Print-Caro SRL, 2017, pp. 771-786. ISBN 978-9975-56-439-7.
21. Roshka, P.I., Blagorazumnaya, O. N., Israeli, M., & Dreiher, D. (2022). *Innovation as an element of the development of healthcare and education in Israel.* Modern engineering and innovative technologies, 24(2), pp. 39-47. Available at: https://www.moderntechno.de/index.php/meit/issue/view/meit24-02/meit24-02 [Accessed 03 Mai 2025].
22. Samanlioglu, F., & Ayağ, Z. (2020). *An intelligent approach for the evaluation of innovation projects.* Journal of Intelligent & Fuzzy Systems, 38(1), 905-915. DOI:10.3233/JIFS-179458
23. Sorochin, S., Sava, L., & Gujuman, L. (2020). *Analiza situaţei curente din sfera inovaţională din Republica Moldova.* Dezvoltarea economico-socială durabilă a euroregiunilor şi a zonelor transfrontaliere. Iași: Performantica, Vol. 37, pp. 477-488. ISBN 978-606-685-742-0.
24. Tsinopoulos, C., Sousa, C. M., & Yan, J. (2018). *Process innovation: Open innovation and the moderating role of the motivation to achieve legitimacy*. Journal of product innovation management, 35(1), pp. 27-48. DOI:10.1111/jpim.12374 [Accessed 25 Apr. 2025].
25. Vaculovschi, E. (2022). *The role of technical progress, innovation and the scientific research system for the development of the economy of the Republic of Moldova*. The International Scientific Conference 30 years of economic reforms in the Republic of Moldova: economic progress via innovation and competitiveness, September 24th-25th, 2021, Chisinau. Chișinău: ASEM, 2022, vol. 2, pp. 40-44. ISBN 978-9975-155-64-9.

UDC: 338.2
JEL Classification: G34, O16
https://doi.org/10.54481/ecosoen.2025.1.02

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT: INTEGRATING ESG PRINCIPLES INTO CORPORATE STRATEGY

DEZVOLTAREA DURABILĂ ȘI MANAGEMENTUL STRATEGIC: INTEGRAREA PRINCIPIILOR ESG ÎN STRATEGIA CORPORATIVĂ

PODDAR Avijit, PhD of Physico-Mathematical Sciences,
Adjunct faculty Bangladesh Campus North California University,
& Research Director (Retired) Human Development Research Center Dhaka 1207, Bangladesh
ROR: https://ror.org/03h0d2228
Institutional E-mail: info@hdrc-bd.com
ORCID: 0009-0003-0854-4109
Personal E-mail: avijit.poddar.bd@gmail.com

ROBU Elena, PhD of Economic Sciences, Associate Professor,
Free International University of Moldova, Faculty of Economic Sciences,
Chisinau, Republic of Moldova
ROR: https://ror.org/054jx1t36
Institutional E-mail: ulim@ulim.md
ORCID: 0000-0002-3815-8976
Personal E-mail: erobu@ulim.md

PODDAR Avijit, Doctor în științe fizico-matematice,
Cadru didactic asociat, Campusul din Bangladesh al Universității North California,
Director de Cercetare (pensionat) al Centrului de Cercetare pentru Dezvoltare Umană, Dhaka 1207, Bangladesh
ROR: https://ror.org/03h0d2228
E-mail instituțional: info@hdrc-bd.com
ORCID: 0009-0003-0854-4109
E-mail personal: avijit.poddar.bd@gmail.com

ROBU Elena, PhD of Economic Sciences, Associate Professor,
Free International University of Moldova, Faculty of Economic Sciences,
Chisinau, Republic of Moldova
ROR: https://ror.org/054jx1t36
Institutional E-mail: ulim@ulim.md
ORCID: 0000-0002-3815-8976
Personal E-mail: erobu@ulim.md

Annotation: *This article explores the strategic integration of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles into corporate management practices, emphasizing their role in shaping sustainable business models and long-term value creation. Drawing on recent academic literature and global corporate case studies, the paper investigates how ESG considerations influence strategic decision-making, stakeholder engagement, and organizational transformation. The analysis highlights the dynamic interplay between sustainability goals and competitive advantage, examining emerging tools such as ESG performance metrics, green innovation strategies, and stakeholder-inclusive governance. The study concludes that ESG integration represents not only a response to regulatory and societal pressures but a strategic imperative that redefines the purpose and resilience of modern organizations.*

Adnotare: *Acest articol explorează integrarea strategică a principiilor de Mediu, Sociale și de Guvernanță (ESG) în practicile de management corporativ, subliniind rolul acestora în modelarea unor modele de afaceri durabile și în crearea valorii pe termen lung. Bazându-se pe literatura academică recentă și pe studii de caz corporative la nivel global, lucrarea investighează modul în care considerațiile ESG*

influențează luarea deciziilor strategice, implicarea părților interesate și transformarea organizațională. Analiza evidențiază interacțiunea dinamică dintre obiectivele de durabilitate și avantajul competitiv, examinând instrumente emergente precum metricile de performanță ESG, strategiile de inovație ecologică și guvernanța incluzivă pentru părțile interesate. Studiul concluzionează că integrarea ESG reprezintă nu doar un răspuns la presiunile de reglementare și sociale, ci și un imperativ strategic care redefinește scopul și reziliența organizațiilor moderne.

Keywords: *sustainable development; ESG; strategic management; corporate governance; stakeholder engagement; green innovation; organizational transformation.*
Cuvinte-cheie: *dezvoltare durabilă; ESG; management strategic; guvernanță corporativă; implicarea părților interesate; inovație verde; transformare organizațională.*

Conflict of interest
The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest
Article received: **15.05.2025**
Accepted for publication: **06.06.2025**
Published: 27.06.2025

Conflict de interese
Autorii declară că nu există conflict de interese
Articol primit: **15.05.2025**
Acceptat pentru publicare: **06.06.2025**
Publicat: **27.06.2025**

© Poddar Avijit, Robu Elena, 2025

Introduction

In recent years, the integration of sustainability into corporate strategy has transitioned from a normative aspiration to a critical determinant of long-term competitiveness and organizational legitimacy. Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) factors are no longer peripheral considerations but have become central to strategic decision-making, risk assessment, and value creation processes (Eccles & Klimenko, 2019). As stakeholders - including investors, regulators, customers, and employees - increasingly demand transparency and accountability, firms are compelled to align their strategic objectives with broader societal and environmental imperatives.

The evolution of ESG from compliance-oriented reporting to a core strategic driver reflects a broader reconfiguration of corporate purpose. Contemporary management literature emphasizes that ESG integration is not merely an ethical obligation but a source of innovation, resilience, and stakeholder trust (Ioannou & Serafeim, 2017; Whelan & Fink, 2020). Companies that embed sustainability into their governance structures and operational models demonstrate greater adaptability in volatile markets, enhanced reputation capital, and improved financial performance over time (Friede, Busch, & Bassen, 2015).

This article aims to critically examine the role of ESG principles in strategic management, focusing on the mechanisms through which sustainable development goals (SDGs) are operationalized at the corporate level. Using a multidisciplinary approach that combines strategic management theory, stakeholder theory, and sustainability research, the study analyzes both theoretical foundations and practical implementations of ESG strategies across industries. Special attention is given to the transformative impact of ESG integration on organizational culture, leadership models, and competitive positioning.

By mapping out emerging trends, institutional challenges, and performance metrics, this article contributes to a nuanced understanding of how ESG considerations are reshaping strategic management in the 21st century. Ultimately, the study underscores that sustainable value creation is contingent not only on environmental stewardship and social equity but also on strategic foresight and governance innovation.

Materials and methods of research

This article adopts a qualitative exploratory research approach, focusing on the evolving integration of ESG principles into strategic management practices. The methodological framework is based on document analysis, as outlined by Bowen (2009), and combines academic research, institutional reports, and corporate sustainability disclosures published between 2020 and 2024.

The primary sources of analysis include peer-reviewed literature from high-impact journals such as the *Strategic Management Journal*, *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Academy of Management Perspectives*, and *California Management Review*. Particular emphasis was placed on recent contributions by Ioannou and Serafeim (2022), Dmytriyev, S. D., Freeman, R. E., & Hörisch, J. (2021), Christensen, D. M., Serafeim, G., & Sikochi, A. (2021), and Eccles and Klimenko (2019), whose works explore the intersection of corporate sustainability, stakeholder theory, and strategic adaptation. These were complemented by policy documents and ESG frameworks issued by the World Economic Forum (2020), the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), and the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB).

To contextualize the theoretical foundations, this article also examines ESG integration practices in multinational firms featured in ESG performance indices such as the Dow Jones Sustainability Index (DJSI) (2023), FTSE4Good (2023), and MSCI ESG Ratings (2023). Corporate data were extracted from publicly available sustainability and integrated reports to identify applied strategies, governance innovations, and performance metrics.

The analytical process employed thematic analysis, following the approach proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), enabling the identification of recurring patterns related to ESG implementation across sectors. This technique allowed for the synthesis of cross-sectoral insights into how sustainability objectives are translated into strategic actions and organizational transformation.

By combining theoretical and empirical sources, the article provides a comprehensive perspective on the mechanisms through which ESG considerations are embedded in corporate strategy, offering a grounded understanding of their impact on value creation and institutional evolution.

Results and considerations

Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) refers to a multidimensional framework used to assess an organization's performance beyond traditional financial metrics. It encompasses environmental sustainability (e.g., carbon emissions, resource efficiency), social responsibility (e.g., labor practices, diversity, community impact), and governance quality (e.g., board structure, ethics, transparency). Initially developed within the context of socially responsible investing (SRI), ESG has since evolved into a critical framework for evaluating corporate resilience, strategic risk, and long-term value creation (Eccles & Klimenko, 2019; Giese et al., 2019).

The integration of ESG principles into strategic management processes has increasingly become a focal point in both academic discourse and corporate practice. This transformation reflects not only external regulatory and reputational pressures but also an evolving understanding of value creation in the 21st century. ESG is no longer conceptualized as a marginal ethical addendum; instead, it is recognized as a structural component of strategic agility, stakeholder alignment, and long-term organizational resilience (Ioannou & Serafeim, 2022; Whelan & Fink, 2020).

The rise of ESG as a strategic domain can be situated within broader theoretical frameworks, including stakeholder theory (Freeman, 2010), institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), and dynamic capabilities theory (Teece, 2007). These perspectives help explain the mechanisms through which external expectations are internalized and translated into sustained organizational routines and strategic reconfiguration. Specifically, stakeholder theory highlights the need to balance the interests of multiple actors in corporate decision-making, while institutional theory contextualizes ESG as a response to normative and coercive pressures. The dynamic capabilities view, meanwhile,

underscores the importance of reconfiguring internal competencies to address emerging environmental and societal demands (Teece, Peteraf & Leih, 2016).

Recent empirical studies support the positive relationship between ESG integration and firm performance. A comprehensive meta-analysis by Friede, Busch, and Bassen (2015), which synthesized over 2,000 individual studies, concluded that approximately 90% of the research identified a non-negative association between ESG performance and financial returns, with a majority indicating a clearly positive correlation. Notably, most of the studies demonstrating such correlations employed longitudinal designs and cross-sectoral datasets, which enhanced the statistical robustness and mitigated risks of publication bias. Further confirmation comes from longitudinal studies by Khan, Serafeim, and Yoon (2016), who found that firms with strong performance on material ESG issues consistently outperform their peers in terms of stock returns and return on assets, particularly in capital-intensive and consumer-facing industries.

These findings have catalyzed a conceptual shift in executive thinking: ESG is no longer perceived as a constraint or cost center, but increasingly as a strategic lever for innovation, differentiation, and sustainable growth (Gartenberg, Prat & Serafeim, 2019; Eccles, Ioannou & Serafeim, 2019). Boardrooms are reconfiguring their strategic frameworks to institutionalize ESG within their performance dashboards, incentive structures, and stakeholder engagement models.

From a strategic positioning standpoint, ESG fosters differentiation in competitive markets. For example, Unilever's strategy has evolved from traditional brand management toward sustainability-driven business models. According to earlier reports, its “Sustainable Living Brands” portfolio grew significantly faster than the rest of the company’s brands, highlighting how aligning environmental and social value with customer-facing strategy can enhance both loyalty and profitability (Unilever, 2019; Unilever, 2023). Similarly, Danone’s “One Planet. One Health” framework integrates ESG goals across supply chains, innovation programs, and stakeholder communication strategies, reshaping how the firm conceptualizes and delivers nutritional value at scale.

Beyond performance metrics, ESG influences organizational design and governance. Microsoft’s ESG strategy is deeply embedded into executive performance evaluation and long-term incentive schemes. Since 2021, a portion of top-level compensation has been directly tied to carbon emission targets, workforce diversity metrics, and ethical AI deployment (Ioannou & Serafeim, 2019). This reflects a broader trend toward ESG-linked compensation and board-level oversight structures, aimed at institutionalizing accountability and aligning leadership behavior with sustainability goals.

A significant body of research highlights that the integration of ESG principles actively fosters innovation, particularly in domains such as green technology, clean energy, and circular economy models (Akhmadeev, 2024; Babkin, Shkarupeta & Polishchukov, 2023). Tesla and Ørsted exemplify this innovation trajectory. While Tesla has become emblematic of the electric vehicle transition, Ørsted represents one of the most documented ESG-driven corporate transformations. The Danish energy company shifted from being one of Europe’s most coal-intensive utilities to a global leader in offshore wind power, reducing carbon emissions by 87% between 2006 and 2022 (Ørsted, 2022). This transition was accompanied by a tenfold increase in market capitalization and growing ESG-aligned institutional investment, substantiating the hypothesis that ESG frameworks can serve as catalysts for strategic renewal and competitive repositioning (Giese et al., 2019).

Moreover, ESG performance has proven to influence not only firm-level innovation but also consumer behavior and loyalty. A 2023 McKinsey study reported that over 60% of Gen Z and millennial consumers integrate sustainability considerations into purchasing decisions, often displaying a willingness to pay premium prices for ethically sourced and transparently marketed products. Companies such as Patagonia, IKEA, and Allbirds have strategically responded by embedding ESG transparency, carbon labeling, and supply chain traceability into the customer

experience. For instance, Patagonia's transfer of ownership to a climate-focused trust and Allbirds' third-party verified carbon footprint labeling both demonstrate how ESG practices can drive emotional engagement and consumer trust (ESG News, 2023; Marketinga.eu, 2023).

These developments reinforce the evolving marketing and strategic management premise that ESG is not merely a matter of regulatory compliance but a key driver of experiential value, innovation capacity, and brand differentiation in increasingly sustainability-conscious markets.

From a cultural and managerial perspective, the transition toward ESG-aligned strategies necessitates internal transformation. ESG adoption often requires reconfiguring corporate culture toward inclusivity, transparency, and systems thinking. As Wamba-Taguimdje et al. (2020) observe, ESG-ready organizations develop dynamic capabilities that enable sensing and responding to environmental changes more effectively. These capabilities include cross-functional collaboration, iterative learning processes, and digital sustainability tools (e.g., AI-powered impact tracking, real-time carbon accounting).

However, ESG implementation is fraught with challenges. The lack of standardization among ESG frameworks - such as GRI, SASB, TCFD, and ISSB - can create confusion and "framework fatigue" among corporate actors. Rating divergence, as documented by Berg, Kölbel, and Rigobon (2022), undermines the comparability and reliability of ESG scores, making it difficult for firms to benchmark performance or for investors to make informed decisions. Moreover, many organizations face a gap between ESG ambition and operational capability, often resulting in superficial disclosures rather than substantive transformation.

The strategic value of ESG is increasingly challenged by the prevalence of greenwashing, wherein organizations exaggerate or misrepresent their sustainability efforts. High-profile cases - including those involving Volkswagen's diesel emissions scandal, ExxonMobil's public statements versus internal climate science, and several fashion brands accused of misleading environmental labeling - illustrate how deceptive ESG communication can provoke regulatory investigations, public backlash, and investor divestment (Delmas & Burbano, 2011; BlackRock, 2023). One of the most emblematic recent examples is the case of DWS Group, a subsidiary of Deutsche Bank, which faced legal probes in the United States and Germany in 2022 after whistleblowers alleged that the company had overstated ESG integration in its asset management disclosures. The fallout included the resignation of the CEO and a significant outflow of capital from ESG-designated funds (Reuters, 2022).

This case underscores the reputational and financial risks associated with ESG misalignment and highlights the urgent need for independent verification and consistent reporting standards. According to the European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA), more than 50% of sustainability-related claims in corporate disclosures reviewed in 2022 lacked sufficient evidence or verifiable key performance indicators (ESMA, 2022). These findings call attention to the necessity of third-party auditing mechanisms, regulatory harmonization, and transparent, science-based ESG metrics to ensure the credibility of sustainability performance.

From the standpoint of strategic differentiation, the mainstreaming of ESG creates a new paradox. As more firms converge around ESG themes, the ability to use sustainability as a unique positioning tool diminishes. Scholars such as Eccles, R. G., Johnstone-Louis, M., Mayer, C., & Stroehle, J. C. (2020) have argued that ESG is undergoing "strategic commodification", wherein firms adopt similar rhetoric and metrics, diluting potential competitive advantage. Consequently, true ESG differentiation must emerge from deeper integration - such as governance innovation, stakeholder partnerships, and systemic impact models - rather than surface-level compliance.

At the institutional level, ESG transformation is deeply intertwined with evolving macroeconomic dynamics and regulatory frameworks. In the European Union, the implementation of the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and the Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation (SFDR) marks a significant shift toward mandatory, standardized disclosure of ESG-

related risks, impacts, and opportunities. These regulations require large companies and financial institutions to report on double materiality, value chain emissions, and taxonomy alignment in accordance with the European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS), thereby enhancing transparency and comparability across markets (European Commission, 2023).

These regulatory advances are fundamentally reshaping global capital markets. ESG-aligned investment strategies now represent an expanding proportion of assets under management, driven by both compliance mandates and stakeholder demand. While the European Union has emerged as a frontrunner in ESG policy design, other jurisdictions are rapidly aligning. In the United States, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) proposed new climate disclosure rules in 2022, requiring publicly traded companies to report Scope 1, 2, and - in some cases - Scope 3 emissions, as well as climate-related risks to business strategy and operations (SEC, 2022). Similarly, Asia-Pacific countries such as Japan and Singapore are advancing ESG taxonomies, stewardship codes, and transition finance initiatives aimed at attracting sustainable capital and facilitating investor due diligence.

This ongoing process of policy diffusion suggests the formation of a quasi-global ESG governance architecture, characterized by increasing convergence of disclosure standards, assurance requirements, and investor expectations. According to BlackRock's 2023 sustainability report, the firm managed over $300 billion in sustainable investment strategies, underscoring the structural reallocation of capital toward companies with demonstrably strong ESG performance (BlackRock, 2023).

Another emergent aspect of ESG strategy is the integration of advanced digital technologies to enhance sustainability measurement, reporting, and impact management. Organizations are increasingly leveraging artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, and big data analytics to improve the traceability, auditability, and real-time monitoring of ESG indicators (Wamba-Taguimdje et al., 2020; Mustak et al., 2021). These tools facilitate the collection of granular data across complex supply chains, enabling firms to identify risks, measure carbon footprints, and report ESG performance with greater accuracy and transparency.

For instance, IBM has deployed blockchain-based platforms such as IBM Food Trust to improve sustainability and traceability across global food supply chains. These systems enable end-to-end visibility into environmental and social impacts, thereby supporting more informed procurement and ethical sourcing practices (IBM, 2023). Similarly, Salesforce launched its "Net Zero Cloud" platform to help companies dynamically track Scope 1, 2, and 3 greenhouse gas emissions, simulate mitigation scenarios, and generate real-time reports for ESG disclosures (Salesforce, 2023).

While these digital enablers do not replace human judgment or governance structures, they augment strategic decision-making by embedding sustainability intelligence into day-to-day operations. This evolution signals the rise of a hybrid ESG governance model, where technology complements corporate accountability, enabling adaptive, data-driven responses to sustainability challenges.

Emerging academic research also highlights the potential of machine learning models in ESG risk prediction and green finance forecasting. For instance, Lim (2024) provides a comprehensive overview of artificial intelligence applications in sustainable finance, noting that machine learning tools are increasingly adopted by institutional investors to assess forward-looking ESG exposures beyond static disclosures (Lim, 2024). Such tools enhance the ability to anticipate ESG-related risks, improve portfolio allocation, and support regulatory compliance.

Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic and the global climate crisis have exposed systemic fragilities and accelerated the urgency of ESG transformation. Organizations with strong ESG foundations demonstrated higher operational continuity and reputational resilience during the pandemic, as reported by the World Economic Forum (2021). This further validates ESG as a strategic

asset that extends beyond environmental metrics and reflects an organization's preparedness for uncertainty, complexity, and stakeholder scrutiny.

As ESG evolves into a strategic paradigm, its study increasingly intersects with disciplines such as behavioral economics, data science, corporate law, and organizational psychology - inviting transdisciplinary approaches to understand its systemic implications.

Conclusion

The strategic integration of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles marks a fundamental reorientation of how organizations define value, manage risk, and sustain long-term competitiveness. This article has demonstrated that ESG considerations are increasingly embedded not only in corporate reporting frameworks but also in core strategic functions - ranging from innovation and stakeholder engagement to executive governance and capital allocation.

Empirical evidence and corporate case analyses confirm that ESG-aligned firms exhibit greater resilience, stakeholder trust, and financial performance, particularly in volatile and uncertain environments. Leading organizations such as Unilever, Ørsted, Microsoft, and Patagonia exemplify how ESG can serve as a catalyst for strategic transformation, enabling firms to align societal value with competitive advantage. At the same time, the challenges of implementation - ranging from greenwashing to metric fragmentation - underscore the need for institutional coordination, robust assurance mechanisms, and organizational commitment beyond symbolic compliance.

Importantly, ESG is no longer a peripheral or philanthropic endeavor but a strategic imperative. As investor expectations evolve and regulatory frameworks such as the CSRD and SFDR mature, firms are compelled to institutionalize sustainability not only as a moral duty but as a source of differentiation and systemic impact. This requires a shift in leadership mindsets, cultural norms, and strategic capabilities - toward adaptive, inclusive, and future-oriented business models.

The findings also suggest that ESG represents a new frontier for strategic management theory. Future research could further explore the dynamic interplay between ESG integration and digital transformation, the role of ESG in crisis resilience, and sector-specific models of sustainable value creation. In particular, longitudinal and cross-cultural studies are needed to assess the causal mechanisms linking ESG implementation with firm-level outcomes across different institutional environments.

In sum, the effective incorporation of ESG principles into corporate strategy is not merely a reflection of external pressure or reputational logic - it is a forward-looking exercise in governance innovation, stakeholder alignment, and purposeful capitalism. Organizations that successfully navigate this transition are not only better equipped for sustainable growth but also more capable of contributing meaningfully to the societal and ecological challenges of the twenty-first century.

Bibliography

1. Berg, F., Kölbel, J. F., & Rigobon, R. (2022). *Aggregate Confusion: The Divergence of ESG Ratings.* Review of Finance, 26(6), pp.1315–1344. https://doi.org/10.1093/rof/rfac033 Available at: https://academic.oup.com/rof/article/26/6/1315/6590670 [Accessed 19 Mar. 2025].
2. BlackRock. (2022). *Energy investing: Setting the record straight.* [online] Available at: https://www.blackrock.com/corporate/newsroom/setting-the-record-straight/energy-investing [Accessed 30 Mar. 2025].
3. BlackRock. (2023). *Sustainability at BlackRock: 2023 Annual Stewardship Report.* [online] Available at: https://www.blackrock.com/corporate/sustainability [Accessed 30 Mar. 2025].
4. Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method. Qualitative Research Journal, 9(2), pp.27–40. https://doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027 Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/240807798_Document_Analysis_as_a_Qualitative_Research_Method [Accessed 19 Mar. 2025].

5. Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). *Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology.* Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3(2), pp.77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235356393_Using_thematic_analysis_in_psychology [Accessed 30 Mar. 2025].
6. Christensen, D. M., Serafeim, G., & Sikochi, A. (2021). *Why Is Corporate Virtue in the Eye of the Beholder? The Case of ESG Ratings.* The Accounting Review, 97(1), pp.147–175. https://doi.org/10.2308/TAR-2019-0506 Available at: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3793804 [Accessed 21 Mar. 2025].
7. Delmas, M. A., & Burbano, V. C. (2011). *The Drivers of Greenwashing.* California Management Review, 54(1), pp.64–87. https://doi.org/10.1525/cmr.2011.54.1.64 Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228133505_The_Drivers_of_Greenwashing [Accessed 30 Mar. 2025].
8. DiMaggio, P. J., & Powell, W. W. (1983). *The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields.* American Sociological Review, 48(2), pp.147–160. https://doi.org/10.2307/2095101 Available at: https://www.scirp.org/reference/referencespapers?referenceid=2494584 [Accessed 30 Mar. 2025].
9. Dmytriyev, S. D., Freeman, R. E., & Hörisch, J. (2021). *The Relationship Between Stakeholder Theory and Corporate Social Responsibility: Differences, Similarities, and Implications for Social Issues in Management.* Journal of Management Studies, 58(6), pp.1441–1470. https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12684 Available at: https://ideas.repec.org/a/bla/jomstd/v58y2021i6p1441-1470.html [Accessed 21 Mar. 2025].
10. Dow Jones Sustainability Index (DJSI). (2023). *S&P Global ESG Scores*. [online] Available at: https://www.spglobal.com/esg/csa/indices/djsi-index-family [Accessed 30 Mar. 2025].
11. Eccles, R. G., & Klimenko, S. (2019). *The Investor Revolution*. Harvard Business Review, 97(3), pp.106–116. https://hbr.org/2019/05/the-investor-revolution Available at: https://hbr.org/2019/05/the-investor-revolution [Accessed 30 Mar. 2025].
12. Eccles, R. G., Ioannou, I., & Serafeim, G. (2014). *The Impact of Corporate Sustainability on Organizational Processes and Performance.* Management Science, 60(11), pp.2835–2857. https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.2014.1984 Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/24550546 [Accessed 31 Mar. 2025].
13. Eccles, R. G., Johnstone-Louis, M., Mayer, C., & Stroehle, J. C. (2020). *The Board's Role in Sustainability*. Harvard Business Review, September–October 2020. https://hbr.org/2020/09/the-boards-role-in-sustainability Available at: https://www.alexandria.unisg.ch/entities/publication/f25a9cf7-9e90-4d79-a665-cae5b68bca61 [Accessed 26 Mar. 2025].
14. ESG News. (2023). *Allbirds предоставляет обновлённую информацию о своих принципах устойчивого развития и структуре целей.* [online] Available at: https://esgnews.com/ru/allbirds-%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%B4%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%B2%D0%BB%D1%8F%D0%B5%D1%82-%D0%BE%D0%B1%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%BD%D1%83%D1%8E-%D0%B8%D0%BD%D1%84%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%BC%D0%B0%D1%86%D0%B8%D1%8E-%D0%BE-%D1%81%D0%B2%D0%BE%D0%B8%D1%85-%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%BD%D1%86%D0%B8%D0%BF%D0%B0%D1%85-%D1%83%D1%81%D1%82%D0%BE%D0%B9%D1%87%D0%B8%D0%B2%D0%BE%D0%B3%D0%BE-%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B7%D0%B2%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B8%D1%8F-%D0%B8-%D1%81%D1%82%D1%80%D1%83%D0%BA%D1%82%D1%83%D1%80%D0%B5-%D1%86%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%B9/ [Accessed 29 Mar. 2025].
15. European Commission. (2023). *Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD).* [online] Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/company-reporting-and-auditing/company-reporting/corporate-sustainability-reporting_en [Accessed 26 Mar. 2025].
16. European Commission. (2023). *Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation (SFDR).* [online] Available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32019R2088 [Accessed 23 Mar. 2025].

17. European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA). (2022*). Call for Evidence on ESG Ratings: Summary of Responses.* [online] Available at: https://www.esma.europa.eu/press-news/esma-news/esma-publishes-results-its-call-evidence-esg-ratings?utm [Accessed 23 Mar. 2025].
18. Freeman, R. E. (2010). *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach*. Cambridge University Press, 276 p. ISBN 0521151740, 9780521151740
19. Freeman, R. E., Harrison, J. S., & Wicks, A. C. (2007). *Managing for Stakeholders: Survival, Reputation, and Success*. Journal of Business Ethics, 74(4), pp.361–373. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-007-9515-3 Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235476249_Managing_for_Stakeholders_Survival_Reputation_and_Success [Accessed 28 Mar. 2025].
20. Friede, G., Busch, T., & Bassen, A. (2015). *ESG and Financial Performance: Aggregated Evidence from More Than 2000 Empirical Studies.* Journal of Sustainable Finance & Investment, 5(4), pp.210–233. https://doi.org/10.1080/20430795.2015.1118917 Available at: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2699610 [Accessed 31 Mar. 2025].
21. FTSE Russell. (2023). *FTSE4Good Index Series: Inclusion Criteria and Methodology*. [online] Available at: https://www.ftserussell.com/products/indices/ftse4good [Accessed 29 Mar. 2025].
22. Gartenberg, C., Prat, A., & Serafeim, G. (2019). *Corporate Purpose and Financial Performance.* Organization Science, 30(1), pp.1–18. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2018.1239 Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330490017_Corporate_Purpose_and_Financial_Performance [Accessed 30 Mar. 2025].
23. Giese, G., Lee, L.-E., Melas, D., Nagy, Z., & Nishikawa, L. (2019). *Foundations of ESG Investing: How ESG Affects Equity Valuation, Risk, and Performance.* The Journal of Portfolio Management, 45(5), pp.69–83. https://doi.org/10.3905/jpm.2019.45.5.069 Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334158531_Foundations_of_ESG_Investing_How_ESG_Affects_Equity_Valuation_Risk_and_Performance [Accessed 19 Mar. 2025].
24. Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). (2020). *Consolidated Standards of Sustainability Reporting.* [online] Available at: https://www.globalreporting.org/ [Accessed 30 Mar. 2025].
25. IBM. (2023). *IBM Blockchain and Food Trust Platform Overview.* [online] Available at: https://www.ibm.com/blockchain/solutions/food-trust [Accessed 21 Mar. 2025].
26. Ioannou, I., & Serafeim, G. (2019*). Corporate Sustainability: A Strategy?* Harvard Business School Accounting & Management Unit Working Paper No. 19-065 https://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3312191 Available at: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3312191 [Accessed 30 Mar. 2025].
27. Khan, M., Serafeim, G., & Yoon, A. (2016). *Corporate Sustainability: First Evidence on Materiality.* The Accounting Review, 91(6), pp.1697–1724. https://doi.org/10.2308/accr-51383 Available at: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2575912 [Accessed 28 Mar. 2025].
28. Lim, T. (2024). *Environmental, social, and governance (ESG) and artificial intelligence in finance: State-of-the-art and research takeaways. Artificial Intelligence Review (2024), pp.57-76.* https://doi.org/10.1007/s10462-024-10708-3 Available at: https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10462-024-10708-3 [Accessed 28 Mar. 2025].
29. Marketinga.eu. (2023). *Экологичный бизнес - маркетинговый тренд или реальность?* [online] Available at: https://marketinga.eu/kak-zapustit-biznes-v-germanii/ekologichnyy-biznes-marketingovyy-trend-ili-realnost.html [Accessed 28 Mar. 2025].
30. MSCI ESG Ratings. (2023). *Methodology and Insights.* [online] Available at: https://www.msci.com/our-solutions/esg-investing/esg-ratings [Accessed 31 Mar. 2025].
31. Mustak, M., Salminen, J., Plé, L., & Wirtz, J. (2021). *Artificial Intelligence in Marketing: Topic Modeling, Scientometric Analysis, and Research Agenda.* Journal of Business Research, 124, pp.389–404. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.10.044 Available at: https://ideas.repec.org/a/eee/jbrese/v124y2021icp389-404.html [Accessed 19 Mar. 2025].
32. Ørsted. (2022). *Ørsted ESG Performance Report 2022.* [online] Available at: https://cdn.orsted.com/-/media/2022-annual-report/orsted-esg-performance-report-2022.pdf [Accessed 30 Mar. 2025].
33. Reuters. (2022). *DWS CEO steps down amid greenwashing allegations and SEC probe*. [online] Available at: https://www.reuters.com/business/sustainable-business/dws-ceo-steps-down-amid-greenwashing-allegations-sec-probe-2022-06-01/ [Accessed 30 Mar. 2025].

34. Salesforce. (2023). *Net Zero Cloud: Sustainability Management Platform.* [online] Available at: https://www.salesforce.com/products/net-zero-cloud/overview/ [Accessed 19 Mar. 2025].
35. Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB). (2020). *SASB Standards Overview.* [online] Available at: https://www.sasb.org/standards/ [Accessed 30 Mar. 2025].
36. Teece, D. J. (2007). *Explicating dynamic capabilities: The nature and microfoundations of (sustainable) enterprise performance.* Strategic Management Journal, 28(13), pp.1319–1350. https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.640 Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/227802298_Explicating_dynamic_capabilities_The_nature_and_microfoundations_of_sustainable_enterprise_performance [Accessed 21 Mar. 2025].
37. Teece, D. J., Peteraf, M. A., & Leih, S. (2016). *Dynamic Capabilities and Organizational Agility: Risk, Uncertainty, and Strategy in the Innovation Economy*. California Management Review, 58(4), pp.13–35. https://doi.org/10.1525/cmr.2016.58.4.13 Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/305923460_Dynamic_Capabilities_and_Organizational_Agility_Risk_Uncertainty_and_Strategy_in_the_Innovation_Economy [Accessed 21 Mar. 2025].
38. U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). (2022). *Proposed Rule: The Enhancement and Standardization of Climate-Related Disclosures for Investors.* [online] Available at: https://www.sec.gov/news/press-release/2022-46 [Accessed 30 Mar. 2025].
39. Unilever. (2019). *Annual Report and Accounts 2019*. [online] Available at: https://www.unilever.com/investors/annual-report-and-accounts [Accessed 19 Mar. 2025].
40. Unilever. (2023). *Annual Report and Accounts 2023*. [online] Available at: https://www.unilever.com/investors/annual-report-and-accounts [Accessed 19 Mar. 2025].
41. Wamba-Taguimdje, S.-L., Wamba, S. F., Kamdjoug, J. R. K., & Wanko, C. E. T. (2020). *Influence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on Firm Performance: The Business Value of AI-Based Transformation Projects*. Business Process Management Journal, 26(7), pp.1893–1924. https://doi.org/10.1108/BPMJ-10-2019-0411 Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340210925_Influence_of_Artificial_Intelligence_AI_on_Firm_Performance_The_Business_Value_of_AI-based_Transformation_Projects [Accessed 30 Mar. 2025].
42. Whelan, T., & Fink, C. (2020). *ESG and Financial Performance: Aggregated Evidence from More Than 1000 Studies Published Between 2015 and 2020*. NYU Stern Center for Sustainable Business. [online] Available at: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.stern.nyu.edu/sites/default/files/assets/documents/NYU-RAM_ESG-Paper_2021%20Rev_0.pdf [Accessed 28 Mar. 2025].
43. World Economic Forum. (2020). *The Global Competitiveness Report 2020.* [online] Available at: https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-competitiveness-report-2020 [Accessed 30 Mar. 2025].
44. World Economic Forum. (2021). *Global Risks Report 2021*. [online] Available at: https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-risks-report-2021 [Accessed 28 Mar. 2025].
45. Ахмадеев, А.М. (2024). *Развитие «зеленых» технологий и инноваций в регионе как драйвер ESG-трансформации (на примере Республики Башкортостан).* Экономика и управление: научно-практический журнал, №1 (175), сс. 51–54. DOI: 10.34773/EU.2024.1.9 Available at: https://ekam-journal.com/images/2024/1-2024/Akhmadeev.pdf [Accessed 30 Mar. 2025].
46. Бабкин, А.В., Шкарупета, Е.В., Польщиков, Т.И. (2023). *Концепция эффективного устойчивого ESG-развития промышленных экосистем в циркулярной экономике.* Экономическое возрождение России, №1 (75), сс.124–139. DOI: 10.37930/1990-9780-2023-1-75-124-139 Available at: https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/kontseptsiya-effektivnogo-ustoychivogo-esg-razvitiya-promyshlennyh-ekosistem-v-tsirkulyarnoy-ekonomike [Accessed 26 Mar. 2025].

UDC: 378.1, 331.1
JEL Classification: I25, O35
https://doi.org/10.54481/ecosoen.2025.1.03

MANAGING INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY OF STAFF IN THE ORGANIZATION

УПРАВЛЕНИЕ ИННОВАЦИЯМИ И КРЕАТИВНОСТЬЮ ПЕРСОНАЛА ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ

BLAGORAZUMNAYA Olga, Ph.D. of Economic Sciences, Associate Professor,
Free International University of Moldova, Faculty of Economic Sciences,
Chisinau, Republic of Moldova
ROR: https://ror.org/054jx1t36
Institutional E-mail: oblagorazumnaia@ulim.md
ORCID: 0000-0001-6791-5481
Personal E-mail: olganik57@gmail.com

ISRAELI Milana, Ph.D. of Economic Sciences, Academic member,
Gordon Academic College of Education, Department of Innovation in Education,
Haifa, Israel
Institutional E-mail: milanaisraeli@gordon.ac.il
ORCID: 0000-0002-3033-754X
Personal E-mail: milanaisraeli@gmail.com

БЛАГОРАЗУМНАЯ Ольга, доктор экономических наук, конференциар,
Международный Независимый Университет Молдовы, Факультет экономических наук,
Кишинэу, Республика Молдова
ROR: https://ror.org/054jx1t36
Институциональный e-mail: oblagorazumnaia@ulim.md
ORCID: 0000-0001-6791-5481
Личный e-mail: olganik57@gmail.com

ИЗРАЕЛИ Милана, доктор экономических наук,
Академический педагогический колледж Гордона, Факультет инноваций в образовании и преподавании,
Хайфа, Израиль
Институциональный e-mail: milanaisraeli@gordon.ac.il
ORCID: 0000-0002-3033-754X
Личный e-mail: milanaisraeli@gmail.com

Annotation: *The article examines innovation and personnel creativity management in organizations as a strategic approach to achieving competitive advantage and fostering sustainable development. Creativity management is presented as a multi-level, systematic process requiring continuous adaptation to internal and external changes. Key aspects include personnel recruitment, training, motivation, and performance evaluation aimed at developing employees' creative potential. The scheme of the personnel creativity management system in the organization, developed by the authors, includes four stages. Effective application of this model enhances employee creativity, promotes innovation, and strengthens organizational efficiency, competitiveness sustainability.*

Аннотация: *В статье рассматривается управление инновациями и креативностью персонала в организациях как стратегический подход к достижению конкурентных преимуществ и обеспечению устойчивого развития. Управление креативностью представлено как многоуровневый, системный процесс, требующий постоянной адаптации к внутренним и внешним изменениям. Ключевыми аспектами являются подбор, обучение, мотивация и оценка деятельности персонала, направленные на развитие творческого потенциала сотрудников. Разработанная авторами схема системы управления креативностью персонала в организации включает четыре этапа. Эффективное*

применение данной модели способствует повышению креативности сотрудников, развитию инноваций, повышению эффективности и конкурентоспособности организации.

Keywords: *management, innovation, creativity, administration, personnel.*
Ключевые слова: *управление, инновации, креативность, управление, персонал.*

Conflict of interest
The author declares that there is no conflict of interest
Article received: 13.05.2025
Accepted for publication: 06.06.2025
Published: 27.06.2025

Conflict de interese
Autorul declară că nu are niciun conflict de interese.
Articol primit: 13.05.2025
Acceptat pentru publicare: 06.06.2025
Publicat: 27.06.2025

© Blagorazumnaya Olga, Israeli Milana, 2025

Introduction

In the context of global competition, digital transformation, and accelerating technological change, an organization's ability to innovate has become a key factor in ensuring sustainable development. Modern companies strive not only to implement technological innovations but also to create an internal environment that fosters employee creativity. Managing innovation and employee creativity is viewed as a strategic direction that ensures the organization's long-term competitiveness and adaptability to changing external conditions.

An enterprise's innovative activity largely depends on the level of its employees' creative potential and the effectiveness of mechanisms for its realization (Xu, 2007). In this regard, organizational culture, leadership, motivation systems, and corporate communications play a crucial role in forming a favorable atmosphere for initiative and idea generation. Effective innovation management requires an integrated approach that combines managerial, psychological, and sociocultural dimensions aimed at developing employee creativity and strengthening the organization's innovation culture.

The relevance of this study is determined by the need to develop effective management models that integrate innovation development and the management of employees' creative potential. Analyzing the theoretical foundations and practical approaches in this area makes it possible to identify the factors that contribute to the formation of an innovation-oriented environment and to increase the efficiency of an organization's innovative activities.

The purpose of this article is to examine the mechanisms of managing innovation and employee creativity within organizations and to identify the conditions that ensure the development of an innovative culture and the sustainable improvement of innovation performance.

Materials and methods of research

The study employed both theoretical and empirical methods aimed at analyzing the features of managing innovation and developing employee creativity in organizations of various types. The theoretical foundation of the research is based on the works of domestic and foreign scholars in the fields of innovation management (Hall, 2020), organizational behavior, creativity (Iastremska, 2025), and human capital (Mburu, 2020). Modern concepts of innovation process management (Cubero, 2021), models of creativity stimulation among employees, and approaches to the formation of an innovative organizational culture were examined.

To achieve the research objectives, methods of system, comparative, and structural-functional analysis were applied, allowing the identification of interrelations between elements of the innovation management system and factors influencing the development of employees' creative potential. Content analysis and synthesis of scientific sources were also used to ensure the theoretical validity of the study.

The empirical part of the research included the analysis of statistical data, corporate reports, and the results of sociological surveys conducted among employees engaged in innovation activities. Questionnaire surveys and expert assessments were utilized to identify factors affecting the level of employee creativity and the effectiveness of innovation processes.

The processing and interpretation of the obtained data were carried out using quantitative and qualitative analysis methods, which made it possible to determine key trends and patterns in innovation and creativity management within organizations.

Results and considerations

Today, when innovation and creativity play a key role in the successful development of any field of activity, it is essential to recognize the need for an effective structure for managing employee creativity. Understanding this fundamental necessity is becoming increasingly relevant in the context of a rapidly changing economic and sociocultural environment, where organizations and individuals must continuously adapt to maintain their competitiveness.

Creativity management requires not only the stimulation of individual and collective creativity but also the development of a system capable of effectively organizing, directing, and supporting this process (Arieti, 2021). In this context, the authors proposed creativity management system serves as a fundamental tool that combines freedom of creative expression with the need to achieve specific organizational goals and objectives.

The innovative idea underlying the structural components of the creativity management system within an organization lies in the development and implementation of a comprehensive set of elements aimed at encouraging and supporting employees' creative activities. It is important to emphasize the significance of designing a creativity management structure that enables effective coordination of innovation processes across the organization as a whole. Examining the key aspects of this structure opens new opportunities for innovation, development, and success in a competitive market environment.

To improve the organization's personnel management system and to form a new management direction - creativity management of company personnel - the authors have developed a structure that includes specific components designed to implement this type of management effectively.

The developed structure for managing employee creativity within an organization represents an innovative approach to resource management aimed at stimulating and enhancing the creative potential of personnel. The proposed creativity management system is based on the following key components of the innovation project:

1. Identification of employee talents and potential. This component involves creating mechanisms to identify individual and group creative abilities of company employees. Such an approach enables effective allocation of resources and engagement of the most suitable personnel for the execution of specific tasks.
2. Stimulation of creative thinking. This involves developing a system of motivation and incentives that fosters the growth of employees' creative thinking. It may include organizing contests, providing rewards for innovative ideas, and creating a favorable atmosphere for expressing and implementing creative initiatives.
3. Integration of creative processes into the work environment. This component focuses on introducing methods and tools that contribute to the development of a creative environment within the company. It may include organizing workshops and creativity development training sessions, as well as creating spaces for collective creativity and idea exchange.
4. Feedback and evaluation system. This involves implementing mechanisms for assessing the effectiveness of creativity management and evaluating employees' contributions to innovation processes. Such a system enables the organization to monitor outcomes and make strategic adjustments in line with evolving needs and achievements.

The advantage of this system lies in the fact that its implementation and realization do not require significant additional resources. It can be easily integrated into the existing management system of any organization simply by introducing a new management dimension – creativity management.

This approach enables the organization not only to maintain its competitiveness but also to enhance it through the maximum utilization of employees' potential and creative abilities (Islam, 2022). As a result, the organization gains not only innovative ideas and solutions but also a more motivated and engaged workforce, which in turn positively impacts overall efficiency and market success.

The scheme of the personnel creativity management system in the organization, developed by the authors, includes several stages, presented in Figure 1.

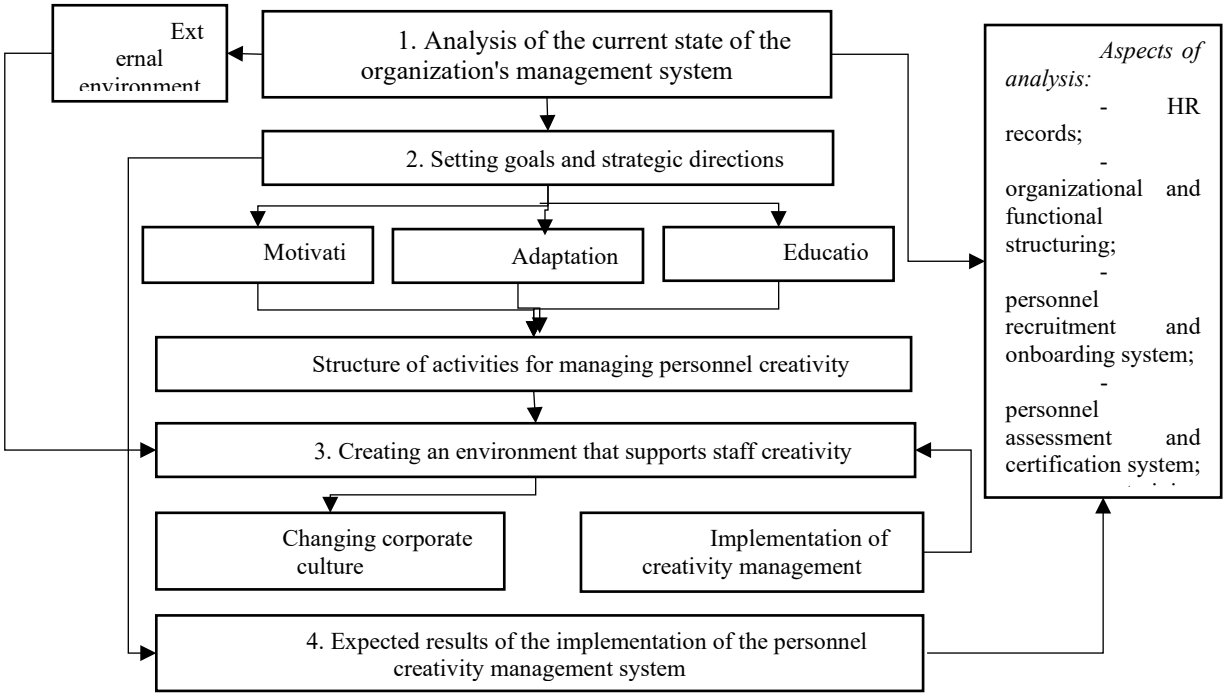

Figure 1. Stages of development and implementation of a personnel creativity management system in an organization

This model includes four stages in the development and implementation of an employee creativity management system:

1. Analysis of the current state of the organization's management system;
2. Setting goals and developing strategic directions for the employee creativity management system;
3. Creating an environment that supports employee creativity;
4. Expected results of implementing the employee creativity management system.

These components represent the logical stages in the process of establishing an employee creativity management system – from analyzing the current situation to evaluating the achieved results. The following sections provide a detailed description of the mechanism and functioning of each stage.

1. Current State of the Organization's Management System. Before developing and implementing a new element – creativity management – within the organization's management system, it is necessary to understand how the existing management framework functions. This includes an analysis of the current methods, processes, structures, and management culture within the

organization. Assessing the current state allows identification of the strengths and weaknesses of the existing management system, the barriers to introducing the new management element, and the changes required for its successful implementation.

Based on this analysis, several problems related to creativity management within organizations can be identified. Some of these include:

1. Loss of talent and creativity during recruitment. Failure to consider employees' creative potential and capabilities during the hiring process leads to missed opportunities to attract highly qualified and innovation-oriented professionals (Rampa, 2021). This can reduce the company's competitiveness and hinder the development of new ideas.
2. Lack of stimulation of creative activity through motivation and adaptation of new employees. Without a specialist responsible for managing creative potential, there are no systematic measures to encourage creativity and innovation among staff (Steinerowska-Streb, 2020). This can lead to decreased employee motivation and limit the company's capacity to develop new products or improve existing services.
3. Insufficient utilization of intellectual capital in terms of creativity. Without effective management of employee creativity, a company risks underutilizing its intellectual capital (Al-Husseini, 2024). This may result in lower innovation activity and a gradual loss of competitive advantages in the long term.

The current state of management in a company, according to the author's proposed system for managing employee creativity, should be characterized by the following aspects: personnel record management; organizational and functional structuring; recruitment and adaptation system; personnel assessment and certification system; personnel training system; motivation system; corporate culture; and performance monitoring.

Personnel record management should be evaluated in terms of its efficiency and alignment with the organization's strategic objectives. The assessment includes analyzing the accuracy, timeliness, completeness, and reliability of personnel data, as well as evaluating the compliance of methods and technologies used with modern standards and requirements. It is also important to consider the extent to which personnel record management supports managerial decision-making, optimizes the use of human resources, enhances employee performance, and contributes to the achievement of the company's strategic goals.

Organizational and functional structuring within the context of the current management system refers to the process of defining and organizing various functional areas and departments within the organization, taking into account its goals, strategy, and available resources. This includes identifying key functions, tasks, and responsibilities, as well as establishing hierarchies and interrelationships among them. The objective of such structuring is to ensure the organization's effective and coordinated functioning, optimize resource utilization, and achieve strategic objectives.

The recruitment and adaptation system should be regularly evaluated using key indicators and metrics. An important indicator is the *time-to-fill* metric, which reflects the efficiency of the hiring process. Additionally, it is essential to assess the quality of candidates to ensure that their competencies meet the company's needs and contribute to workforce quality. When hiring employees, education and the role of the university in training innovation specialists play an important role (Zarinjooee, 2021). The proportion of successfully adapted employees is another key metric that reflects the effectiveness of the adaptation process.

Employee satisfaction with working conditions and the onboarding process also plays an important role in assessing the effectiveness of recruitment and adaptation systems. Furthermore, it is necessary to monitor employee turnover within the first months of employment to evaluate the long-term effectiveness of these processes. Analyzing the adaptation process and the presence of structured programs that facilitate the successful integration of new employees into the work

environment and corporate culture is equally crucial. All these indicators help identify the strengths of the recruitment and adaptation system, as well as areas requiring further improvement.

The personnel assessment and certification system, according to the author, should be characterized by transparent and objective criteria that align with the company's strategic goals. It is essential that the evaluation process be fair and based on concrete achievements and employee performance outcomes.

The personnel training system reflects the organization's investment in the development of human capital and should be implemented with consideration for both employee needs and organizational objectives. The system must be flexible, adaptive, and focused on enhancing employees' professional skills and competencies. Recently, some organizations have been using artificial intelligence to enhance the creativity of skilled employees (Jia, 2024).

The personnel motivation system in its current state should be diverse and include both material and non-material incentives, which also require evaluation. It should take into account the individual needs and motives of employees and aim to create a stimulating and supportive work environment.

The corporate culture of the company represents a set of shared values, beliefs, norms, and behavioral patterns that define the overall spirit and atmosphere within the organization. It is formed and maintained at all organizational levels and has a significant impact on employee performance and interpersonal relationships.

Performance monitoring is a mandatory and final stage in assessing the current state of management, allowing the company to evaluate the effectiveness of implemented decisions and the achievement of strategic goals (Zia, 2024). It is carried out using key indicators and metrics, which enable the organization to adapt its strategies and tactics in response to changes in the business environment.

Each of the presented aspects characterizing the current management process within the company will be enhanced and expanded – both in content and in essence – under the influence of the employee creativity management system.

2. Setting Goals and Strategic Directions for the Employee Creativity Management System. Based on the analysis of the current state of the personnel management system, the goals and strategic directions for managing employee creativity are formulated (Blagorazumnaya, 2024). The main strategic directions should correspond to the organization's core objectives and values.

Table 1. Strategic Directions for Managing Employee Creativity within the Organization

Strategic Direction	Description of the Direction	Specific Actions in Creativity Management
Motivation	Establishment of a system of material and non-material incentives that takes into account the individual needs and interests of employees.	Implementation of a reward system for innovative and creative ideas; organization of activities aimed at strengthening the internal motivational climate.
Adaptation	Development of a flexible and adaptive onboarding system for new employees, familiarizing them with the corporate culture and organizational processes.	Creation of individualized adaptation programs incorporating creative methodologies and interactive learning formats.
Training and Development	Enhancement of employees' creative skills and competencies through a training and development system focused on innovative methods and approaches.	Organization of creative workshops, master classes, and seminars aimed at fostering creative thinking and problem-solving abilities.

As shown in the table above, each of the strategic directions – motivation, adaptation, and training – is aimed at addressing specific managerial challenges and tasks. They are based on a

systematic analysis of the organization's current state, its needs, and its potential for growth and development.

3. Creating a Supportive Environment. The employee creativity management system within an organization is centered on creating a stimulating and supportive environment that fosters the development and expression of employees' creative potential (Israeli, 2022). This involves designing programs, plans, and tools aimed at identifying, developing, and applying employees' creative abilities in their work, as well as establishing conditions for the free exchange of ideas, collaboration, and innovation within the organization.

The implementation of the strategic directions of the employee creativity management system depends on the degree and nature of the influence of both external and internal environmental factors. These factors should be regularly monitored and assessed comprehensively by the organization.

Among the most significant external factors, given the organization's area of activity, are the following: scientific and technological progress, state innovation policy, and the economic situation.

Scientific and technological advancements open up new opportunities for innovation and improvement of production processes. Government policy in the fields of innovation and entrepreneurship support can encourage companies to implement novel ideas. The economic environment – including inflation rates, unemployment levels, and overall financial indicators – also affects the organization's financial condition and capabilities.

All these factors form the context in which the company operates and may either facilitate or hinder the implementation of strategies for managing employees' creative potential and creativity.

Internal factors are those related to the specific characteristics of the organization's activities. They include the following: corporate culture and company values; organizational structure and management system; level of professionalism and staff qualifications; innovation capabilities and technological equipment; financial condition and resource availability; efficiency of business processes and quality management system; history of previous successes and failures; flexibility and adaptability to external changes; strategic priorities and development goals; and the degree of internal integration and collaboration within the organization.

The success of implementing and realizing the employee creativity management system largely depends on the extent and nature of the influence of these internal factors. This is due to the fact that internal factors define the key framework and conditions under which activities aimed at stimulating and developing employee creativity will take place. For example, the effectiveness of corporate culture and management systems can have a strong impact on employee motivation and readiness for creative work.

Therefore, understanding internal factors and their influence makes it possible to effectively adapt the concept of creativity management to the organization's specific characteristics and ensure the successful achievement of strategic goals.

The use of effective technologies, methods, and tools within the employee creativity management system enables the identification of successful approaches and the adjustment of strategic directions in accordance with changing market needs and requirements. Creativity management technologies are developed and selected based on the organization's unique characteristics (Zeebaree, 2020).

Table 2. Creativity Management Technologies for the Organization

Creativity Management Technology	Description	Application Method within the Company
Design Thinking	A problem-solving and innovation development method focused on user needs	The company applies design thinking to conduct collaborative creative sessions and to develop and

Creativity Management Technology	Description	Application Method within the Company
	and the creation of user-centered products and services.	test new products and services that meet customer needs.
SCRUM	A project management methodology based on iterative and incremental development of software and other products.	The company uses SCRUM to manage software development and other projects. This includes sprint planning, daily stand-ups, retrospectives, and other SCRUM-related activities.
Design Sprint Methodology	A structured process for solving problems and generating innovative solutions within a short time frame through collective creativity.	The company employs design sprints for rapid prototyping and testing of new ideas, as well as for solving complex business problems involving multidisciplinary teams.
Innovation Labs	Dedicated units or spaces established to foster and support innovation and creativity within the organization.	The company operates innovation labs where employees can experiment, develop new concepts and ideas, and collaborate with external stakeholders and the innovation community.
Agile Methodologies	Flexible project management approaches aimed at increasing the speed and adaptability of product and service development.	The company uses various Agile methodologies, such as Kanban, Lean, and Extreme Programming, to manage projects of different scales and complexity. This enables faster responses to market changes and improved process transparency and quality.

The presented creativity management technologies contribute to the active engagement of employees in problem-solving and the development of innovative solutions, thereby increasing their motivation and sense of responsibility for results. They also enable effective collaboration between different departments of the company and stimulate collective creativity, fostering the exchange of ideas and the search for innovative approaches to problem-solving.

4. Expected Results of Implementing the Employee Creativity Management System. This stage is critical, as the data obtained allow conclusions to be drawn regarding the effectiveness of the adopted strategic directions, applied technologies, methods, and tools. It also enables the evaluation of the impact of these changes on key business indicators such as product and service innovativeness, company competitiveness, employee satisfaction and loyalty, and the overall efficiency of the organization's performance.

This stage involves identifying the specific expected outcomes from implementing the employee creativity management system. These outcomes may include an increase in the level of innovation, higher productivity, improved product or service quality, enhanced employee and customer satisfaction, and other positive organizational changes.

Transforming expected results into concrete actions contributes to the adjustment and improvement of the overall management system, including the management of employee creativity. Effective utilization of employees' creative potential enhances the overall performance of the company. Continuous improvement and regular updating of creativity management methods enable the organization to remain at the forefront of its industry, successfully respond to changes in the external environment, and increase its competitiveness.

The effectiveness of implementing the employee creativity management system should be evaluated within the same framework as the first component (the current state of the organization's management system). In this case, these elements, which have undergone changes as a result of the implementation of the creativity management system, can be presented as follows:

1. *Adaptation of personnel accounting in the context of creative management* should include new methods or technologies in personnel accounting when implementing management of employee creativity. This may involve the development of specialized accounting systems that consider not only traditional performance indicators but also employees' creative achievements, participation in innovative projects, and other factors characterizing personnel creativity. It is also important to ensure that personnel accounting processes are adapted to the specifics of working with creative teams, taking into account their unique needs and the particularities of their work activities.
2. *Organizational and functional structuring under the influence of creative management* will be modified to account for the needs and features of managing personnel creativity. This includes changes in the company's organizational structures aimed at creating flexible and open work environments that promote free exchange of ideas and stimulate creativity and innovation. Structural modifications may also involve establishing specialized creative units or teams, as well as implementing practices that facilitate collaboration and cooperation across different parts of the organization.
3. *System for hiring and onboarding creative employees* refers to talent recruitment aimed at attracting specialists with high levels of creativity who can contribute new ideas and innovations to the company. Informing the labor market about talent acquisition is an important part of this process, as it helps attract candidates with the relevant skills and experience that support the company's creative development and its growth in an innovative direction.
4. *System for evaluating and certifying personnel creativity* involves developing and applying methods to assess employees' creative potential and performance in the context of their creativity. One expected outcome is the assessment and differentiation of work with talented employees (Yang, 2024). This allows identifying and rewarding employees who demonstrate high levels of creativity and are capable of making significant contributions to the company's development through innovative ideas and solutions. Within this evaluation system, rewarding personnel creativity is also envisaged, which may include bonuses, incentives, career advancement, and other motivational measures that encourage creative thinking and activity. These measures help maintain and enhance employee motivation and create a favorable atmosphere for creativity in the workplace.
5. *Personnel Training System for Creativity and Creative Thinking* entails the application of contemporary methodologies and approaches aimed at fostering the creative capacities of employees. Among these methodologies, the Belyutin method is particularly notable; it provides a structured framework for instructing employees in the principles and techniques of stimulating creative thinking (Parkhomenko, 2023). This approach incorporates diverse exercises and strategies designed to enhance divergent thinking, generate unconventional solutions, and overcome creative blocks. Moreover, the training system should ensure the continuity of creativity development, implying the ongoing enhancement and expansion of employees' knowledge and skills in this domain. Continuous professional development may include workshops, seminars, practical exercises, online courses, and other educational initiatives, enabling employees to perpetually refine and apply newly acquired competencies. Thus, a comprehensive training system in creativity must encompass foundational principles and methodologies while facilitating the sustained advancement of employees' creative potential.
6. *Motivation System through Personnel Creativity* constitutes a set of measures and instruments aimed at stimulating employees' creative potential and fostering the manifestation of creativity within professional activities. This system encompasses mechanisms for recognizing and rewarding achievements in creativity and innovation, thereby promoting both

creative thinking and a competitive spirit among personnel. Examples include financial incentives and bonuses for proposing and implementing novel ideas, participation in innovative projects, formal recognition or honorary titles for outstanding creative contributions, and the organization of contests and challenges. An effective motivation system enhances employee engagement, encourages the pursuit of innovative solutions, and fosters the development of a culture of innovation within the organization (Pavlenchyk, 2023).

7. *Corporate Culture Incorporating Creative Elements* involves the deliberate establishment and maintenance of an organizational climate that encourages and supports the expression of employees' creative potential. This includes the development of organizational values that prioritize creativity, the implementation of mechanisms and events that facilitate interaction and the exchange of ideas, and the creation of spaces in which employees can freely exercise their creative abilities and initiatives. Such a corporate culture contributes to the enhancement of the organization's innovative capacity and its overall competitiveness.
8. *Monitoring of Personnel Creative Activity, Including Key Performance Indicators (KPIs),* represents a critical instrument for evaluating the effectiveness of creativity management. This monitoring enables organizations to measure the degree of creative engagement among employees, their contributions to innovation processes, and their generation of novel ideas. It also facilitates the identification of successful practices, the detection of areas requiring improvement, and the implementation of corrective measures to optimize the functioning of the creativity management system. Furthermore, the establishment of KPIs related to creative activity provides clarity regarding organizational objectives and incentivizes employees to achieve high levels of performance in innovation and creativity.

In summary, the effective implementation of these components promotes the development and sustained enhancement of an organization's innovative potential, improves productivity and competitiveness, and reinforces a corporate culture conducive to creativity and innovation.

Conclusion

Creativity Management in Organizations represents a complex, multi-level process that requires a systematic approach and continuous attention to both internal and external changes. When properly organized, the process of managing creativity can become a key competitive advantage for an organization, facilitating innovative development and ensuring the fulfillment of customer needs.

A creativity management system will be effective if it incorporates continuous performance monitoring. Evaluating effectiveness and regularly improving the system for managing employee creativity are critical factors for the successful functioning of such a system. The ongoing development of this system enables the organization to adapt to evolving market conditions and technological advancements, while fostering a more flexible and innovative organizational culture. Ultimately, this contributes to achieving competitive advantages and strengthening the organization's market position.

According to the authors, further enhancement of organizational efficiency and development should focus on cultivating:

1) Employees' ability to generate goals and ideas;
2) Risk-taking capacity (through case studies, business simulations);
3) Entrepreneurial skills;
4) Productive creativity;
5) Innovation across all areas of the organization.

Bibliography

1. Al-Husseini, S. (2024). *Examining the impact of top management support on employee creativity through the mediating role of knowledge management and absorptive capacity*. International Journal of Innovation Science, 16(4), pp. 658-682.
2. Arieti, S. (2021). *Creativity: The Magic Synthesis*. New York: Basic Books. 429p. ISBN 10-0465014429.
3. Blagorazumnaya, O., Balan, I., Israeli, M., & Lupu, C. (2024). *Development of a Management Strategy for Forming an Innovation Ecosystem of the University*. Acta Universitatis Danubius. Economica, 20(2), pp. 7-15. Available at: https://dj.univ-danubius.ro/index.php/AUDOE/article/view/2794 [Accessed 29 Mar. 2025].
4. Cubero, J. N., Gbadegeshin, S. A., & Consolación, C. (2021). *Commercialization of disruptive innovations: Literature review and proposal for a process framework*. International Journal of Innovation Studies, 5(3), pp. 127-144. DOI:10.1016/j.ijis.2021.07.001 [Accessed 27 Mar. 2025].
5. Hall, R. W. (2020). *Creating the innovative university*. Technology & Innovation, 21(4), pp. 1-14. DOI:10.21300/21.4.2020.3 [Accessed 24 Mar. 2025].
6. Iastremska, O. M., Stamatin, G. V., & Yaroshenko, V. V. (2025). *Management of Creativity of Managerial Staff of Enterprises: A Theoretical and Practical Review*. Business Inform 4(567), pp. 459-475. DOI:10.32983/2222-4459-2025-4-459-475 [Accessed 20 Mar. 2025].
7. Islam, T., Chaudhary, A., Jamil, S., & Ali, H. F. (2022). *Unleashing the mechanism between affect-based trust and employee creativity: a knowledge sharing perspective*. Global Knowledge, Memory and Communication, 71(6/7), pp. 509-528. DOI:10.1108/GKMC-04-2021-0071 [Accessed 26 Mar. 2025].
8. Israeli, M. (2022). *The mechanism for management the innovative ecosystem of the university*. EcoSoEn, 1(1-2), pp. 54-59. https://ibn.idsi.md/vizualizare_articol/160085 [Accessed 28 Mar. 2025].
9. Jia, N., Luo, X., Fang, Z., & Liao, C. (2024). *When and how artificial intelligence augments employee creativity*. Academy of Management Journal, 67(1), pp. 5-32. DOI:10.5465/amj.2022.0426 [Accessed 12 Mar. 2025].
10. Mburu, L. N. (2020). *Examining how employee characteristics, workplace conditions and management practices all combine to support creativity, efficiency and effectiveness*. International Journal of Business Management, Entrepreneurship and Innovation, 2(1), pp. 52-64. DOI:10.35942/jbmed.v2i1.102 [Accessed 19 Mar. 2025].
11. Pavlenchyk, N., Pavlenchyk, A., Skrynkovskyy, R., & Tsyuh, S. (2023). *The influence of management creativity on the optimality of management decisions over time: An innovative aspect*. Journal of Eastern European and Central Asian Research (JEECAR), 10(3), pp. 498-514. DOI:10.15549/jeecar.v10i3.1318 [Accessed 21 Mar. 2025].
12. Parkhomenko, K. (2023). *The Pyramidal and Polygonal Constructive Modelling Method in the System of Professional Art Education*. Педагогически алманах, 31(1), pp. 97-106. Available at: https://ru.scribd.com/document/884999090/9859 [Accessed 19 Mar. 2025].
13. Rampa, R., & Agogué, M. (2021). *Developing radical innovation capabilities: Exploring the effects of training employees for creativity and innovation*. Creativity and Innovation Management, 30(1), pp. 211-227. Available at: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/am-pdf/10.1111/caim.12423 [Accessed 21 Mar. 2025].
14. Steinerowska-Streb, I., & Głód, G. (2020). *Innovations in Polish family firms. Exploring employee creativity and management practices that stimulate innovative thinking*. Journal of Entrepreneurship, Management and Innovation, 16(2), pp. 231-260. DOI:10.7341/20201628 [Accessed 20 Mar. 2025].
15. Xu, F., & Rickards, T. (2007). *Creative management: A predicted development from research into creativity and management*. Creativity and Innovation management, 16(3), pp. 216-228. DOI:10.1111/j.1467-8691.2007.00445.x [Accessed 22 Mar. 2025].
16. Yang, B. (2024). *The Impact of Transformational Leadership on Internal Knowledge Transfer: The Mediating Role of Employee Creativity and the Moderating Role of Power Distance*. Journal of China Studies, pp. 27-48. DOI:10.1108/MRR-02-2017-0032 [Accessed 17 Mar. 2025].

17. Zarinjooee, M., Nemati, M. A., & Reshadatjoo, H. (2021). *Identification of the role of the university in creating innovation ecosystem.* Journal of Research in Educational Systems, 15(52), pp. 157-168. DOI:10.7165/wtr2015.4.3.132 [Accessed 25 Mar. 2025].
18. Zia, S., & Ahmed, K. (2024). *Employee creativity deterrence by abusive supervision through the lens (mediation) of employee silence.* Cogent Business & Management, 11(1), pp. 2350787. DOI:10.1080/23311975.2024.2350787 [Accessed 26 Mar. 2025].
19. Zeebaree, M., Ismael, G. Y., Nakshabandi, O. A., Saleh, S. S., & Aqel, M. (2020). *Impact of innovation technology in enhancing organizational management.* Studies of Applied Economics, pp. 38(4). DOI:10.25115/eea.v38i4.3970 [Accessed 23 Mar. 2025].

UDC: 339.138
JEL Classification: M31
https://doi.org/10.54481/ecosoen.2025.1.04

STRATEGIC MARKETING TRANSFORMATION IN THE AGE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: TOOLS, TRENDS, AND ORGANIZATIONAL ADAPTATION

TRANSFORMAREA MARKETINGULUI STRATEGIC ÎN ERA INTELIGENȚEI ARTIFICIALE: INSTRUMENTE, TENDINȚE ȘI ADAPTARE ORGANIZAȚIONALĂ

ROBU Elena, PhD of Economic Sciences, Associate Professor,
Free International University of Moldova, Faculty of Economic Sciences,
Chisinau, Republic of Moldova
ROR: https://ror.org/054jx1t36
Institutional E-mail: ulim@ulim.md
ORCID: 0000-0002-3815-8976
Personal E-mail: erobu@ulim.md

ROBU Elena, doctor în științe economice, conferențiar universitar,
Universitatea Internațională Liberă din Moldova, Facultatea Științe Economice,
Chișinău, Republica Moldova
ROR: https://ror.org/054jx1t36
E-mail instituțional: ulim@ulim.md
ORCID: 0000-0002-3815-8976
E-mail personal: erobu@ulim.md

Annotation: *This article analyzes the transformation of strategic marketing driven by artificial intelligence (AI), with a focus on emerging tools, market dynamics, and organizational adaptation to digital disruption. Drawing upon recent scholarly literature and real-world business cases, it examines how AI technologies reshape customer engagement, value creation, and data-informed decision-making. Special attention is paid to the integration of machine learning, personalization algorithms, and conversational agents into marketing strategies, as well as the institutional challenges and ethical issues that accompany these developments. The findings indicate that AI integration represents not only a technological shift, but also a profound managerial and cultural transformation, requiring ongoing adaptation from companies striving for long-term competitive advantage.*

Adnotare: *Acest articol investighează transformarea marketingului strategic determinată de integrarea inteligenței artificiale (IA), concentrându-se pe instrumentele emergente, dinamica pieței și adaptarea organizațională la disrupția digitală. Bazându-se pe studii recente din literatura științifică de specialitate și pe exemple relevante din practică, articolul analizează modul în care tehnologiile IA remodelează implicarea clienților, crearea valorii și luarea deciziilor bazate pe date. O atenție deosebită este acordată integrării învățării automate, algoritmilor de personalizare și agenților conversaționali în strategiile de marketing, precum și provocărilor instituționale și implicațiilor etice generate de aceste procese. Concluziile subliniază că integrarea IA nu reprezintă doar o schimbare tehnologică, ci și o transformare managerială și culturală profundă, care impune o adaptare constantă din partea organizațiilor orientate spre un avantaj competitiv sustenabil.*

Keywords: *artificial intelligence; strategic marketing; digital transformation; organizational change; machine learning, personalization; ethical challenges.*

Cuvinte-cheie: *inteligență artificială; marketing strategic; transformare digitală; schimbare organizațională; învățare automată; personalizare; provocări etice.*

Conflict of interest
The author declares that there is no conflict of interest
Article received: **04.04.2025**
Accepted for publication: **06.06.2025**
Published: 27.06.2025

Conflict de interese
Autorul declară că nu are niciun conflict de interese.
Articol primit: **04.04.2025**
Acceptat pentru publicare: **06.06.2025**
Publicat: **27.06.2025**

© Robu Elena, 2025

Introduction

In recent years, artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative force across industries, profoundly altering traditional marketing strategies and practices (Mustak, Salminen, Plé, & Wirtz, 2021). As companies face increasing pressure to deliver personalized experiences and improve decision-making speed, AI technologies offer new capabilities for strategic marketing management, including real-time customer analytics, content personalization, predictive modeling, and automation (Huang & Rust, 2021). These tools not only enhance operational efficiency but also enable marketers to rethink how value is created and delivered to customers in a dynamic digital environment.

The digital transformation triggered by AI adoption goes beyond technological implementation. It requires firms to reconfigure their strategic vision, restructure organizational capabilities, and embrace new data-centric cultures (Davenport et al., 2019). In this context, Dias and Lauretta (2024) highlight that AI and deep learning are revolutionizing various business processes, including marketing, by facilitating personalized customer interactions and enhancing organizational efficiency through data-driven decision-making.

Consequently, the integration of AI into marketing strategies is no longer optional but essential for maintaining competitiveness in rapidly evolving markets. This article aims to investigate the current trends and practical implications of AI integration in strategic marketing. The analysis is grounded in contemporary academic literature and industry evidence, emphasizing both the opportunities and challenges posed by AI technologies. It explores how AI reshapes strategic marketing through three primary lenses: technological tools, organizational adaptation, and ethical considerations.

Materials and methods of research

This study adopts a qualitative exploratory approach grounded in contemporary developments in strategic marketing and artificial intelligence (AI). The methodological framework is based on a multi-source document analysis (Bowen, 2009), integrating peer-reviewed academic articles, reports from international organizations, and selected case studies from large-scale enterprises implementing AI-driven marketing strategies between 2019 and 2024.

To ensure validity and triangulation, sources were selected from high-impact journals indexed in Scopus and Web of Science, such as the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *Journal of Business Research*, and *Harvard Business Review*. The selection criteria included empirical rigor, recency, relevance to AI-marketing integration, and conceptual contributions to strategic management theory.

The research process consisted of three primary stages: (1) identifying dominant AI-enabled tools used in strategic marketing (e.g., recommendation systems, automated content generation, predictive analytics); (2) examining organizational responses and structural adaptations to these tools; and (3) assessing potential limitations, risks, and ethical considerations based on expert evaluations and secondary data.

The analytical technique employed was thematic analysis, which allowed the classification of patterns and cross-sectoral implications. This approach is consistent with the methodological

guidelines proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), enabling the detection of recurring strategic themes and transformation models across diverse organizational contexts.

Results and considerations

The integration of artificial intelligence into strategic marketing represents a significant shift in how firms conceptualize and execute long-term value creation. To fully grasp the implications of this transformation, it is essential to understand what constitutes strategic marketing itself. In the academic literature, strategic marketing is typically defined as a forward-looking, market-driven process that aligns organizational resources with emerging opportunities to achieve sustainable competitive advantage (Varadarajan, 2010; Day & Moorman, 2010). Unlike operational marketing, which focuses on short-term promotional tactics, strategic marketing involves comprehensive market analysis, segmentation, positioning, and the development of customer-centric value propositions over extended time horizons.

Within this conceptual framework, artificial intelligence is not merely an auxiliary tool but a catalyst for rethinking the very foundations of marketing strategy. By enabling real-time data processing, predictive modeling, and hyper-personalization, AI reshapes how organizations interpret market dynamics, identify emerging consumer trends, and adjust their strategic positioning accordingly. Rather than functioning as a separate technological layer, AI is increasingly embedded into the core functions of strategic marketing - transforming it into a more agile, evidence-based, and continuously adaptive discipline.

Recent developments demonstrate that firms are no longer adopting AI in isolated applications but integrating it as a cross-functional capability throughout the entire marketing value chain. From market intelligence and product development to campaign orchestration and post-sale engagement, AI systems enhance the speed, accuracy, and scalability of decision-making processes. This evolution marks a departure from intuition-based planning toward a model of continuous learning driven by data flows and algorithmic feedback loops.

The rise of artificial intelligence in strategic marketing represents a paradigm shift rather than a linear progression of existing practices. AI technologies such as machine learning, natural language processing, and neural networks have significantly enhanced the marketer's ability to understand, predict, and influence consumer behavior in real time. These capabilities are not merely operational enhancements; they transform the fundamental logic of strategic decision-making.

A growing body of empirical research demonstrates the transformative impact of AI on customer segmentation and behavioral targeting. Traditional static demographic profiling is increasingly being supplanted by dynamic, real-time segmentation models, powered by AI-driven analysis of behavioral and contextual data (Wedel & Kannan, 2016). Companies such as Amazon and Starbucks exemplify this shift, using AI to detect micro-trends and instantly adapt marketing offers - through personalized product recommendations or location-based promotions - thus enhancing responsiveness to evolving consumer preferences.

To further illustrate the practical implications of these developments, Table 1 presents a comparative overview of how leading companies apply artificial intelligence within their marketing strategies. The table highlights specific AI technologies in use, supported by concrete examples and measurable business outcomes, demonstrating AI's tangible contribution to strategic marketing performance.

Table 1. AI-powered marketing applications in leading companies

Company	AI-Powered Marketing Applications	Example & Evidence	Outcome / Impact
Amazon	*Personalized recommendations; real-time marketing offers* (e.g. detecting micro-trends and adjusting promotions).	Amazon's AI-driven product recommendation engine (using collaborative filtering and deep learning) is integral to its marketing – about 35% of all Amazon purchases are driven by these personalized recommendations (MacKenzie, I., Meyer, C., & Noble S., 2013).	This recommendation system significantly boosts cross-selling and revenue. By surfacing relevant products, Amazon increases customer spend and loyalty. (In fact, 35% of sales illustrates how critical AI-based personalization is to Amazon's revenue (MacKenzie, I., Meyer, C., & Noble S., 2013).
Netflix	*Content personalization at scale; predictive analytics for content* (recommendations, custom thumbnails, etc.).	Netflix's AI recommendation engine analyzes each user's viewing history and behavior to suggest movies/series. Notably, around 80% of viewed content on Netflix comes from these recommendations (Yingchia Liu, Yang Xu, & Shiji Zhou, 2024) Netflix estimates that its personalization saves $1 billion per year in retention by preventing churn	Hyper-personalization keeps users engaged and subscribed. The 80% uptake in recommended content demonstrates high user reliance on AI suggestions (Yingchia Liu, Yang Xu, & Shiji Zhou, 2024), and the company's low churn (and ~$1B/year saved) shows AI's impact on customer retention
Spotify	*Personalized playlists and music suggestions; predictive user retention models.*	Spotify leverages AI for features like Discover Weekly – an algorithmically curated playlist for each user. These tailored playlists encourage regular engagement. Spotify's leadership noted that such personalization initiatives contributed to a decline in subscriber churn by about 30% in recent years (Ek, D., 2022).	Customized content has markedly improved user loyalty. Personalized playlists have reduced churn, meaning more users stay with Spotify longer. The ~30% drop in churn rate (Ek, D., 2022). translates to higher customer lifetime value and growth of Spotify's subscriber base.
Starbucks	*Hyper-personalization in loyalty app; AI-driven promotions; demand prediction for stores.*	Starbucks' Deep Brew AI platform powers personalized offers and menu recommendations in its mobile app. The company's CEO noted they introduced targeted rewards offers (via Deep Brew) to engage customers, which grew active loyalty membership to 34.3 million (+13% YoY) (Starbucks Uses AI-Powered Personalized Rewards to Boost Frequency and Spend, 2024, internet source) . These members exhibit higher frequency and spending – Starbucks Rewards customers "increase both tickets and transactions" thanks to AI-driven engagement (Starbucks Uses AI-Powered Personalized Rewards to Boost Frequency and Spend, 2024, internet source).	Personalized promotions have deepened customer engagement and boosted sales. Starbucks saw a 13% increase in loyalty users (Starbucks Uses AI-Powered Personalized Rewards to Boost Frequency and Spend, 2024, internet source) after enhancing AI-based targeting, and those users spend more per visit (Starbucks Uses AI-Powered Personalized Rewards to Boost Frequency and Spend, 2024, internet source). The result is improved customer retention and higher revenue per customer due to AI-enabled marketing.

Walmart	*AI-based demand forecasting; dynamic pricing optimization; personalized shopping recommendations.*	Walmart employs AI for dynamic pricing and inventory optimization. Its systems adjust product prices in real time based on demand, stock levels, and competition. For example, the AI might mark down over-stocked items and raise prices on scarce ones, ensuring products move efficiently while balancing profit and customer satisfaction (Filipsson, F., 2025). This is coupled with ML demand forecasts to keep stores stocked appropriately (minimizing stockouts and waste) (Filipsson, F., 2025).	Walmart's strategic use of AI in pricing leads to fewer stockouts and less overstock waste (Filipsson, F., 2025), while maximizing sales. Dynamic pricing powered by AI helps optimize revenue – popular items stay in stock and excess inventory is sold through timely discounts (Filipsson, F., 2025). Overall, AI makes Walmart's marketing and merchandising more agile and data-driven, improving both customer experience and margins.
Booking.com	*Machine learning-driven search ranking and recommendations; AI chatbots for customer service.*	Booking.com integrates AI into nearly every part of the customer journey. The company runs hundreds of ML models in production, personalizing search results for travelers (so each user sees lodging options most likely to suit them) (Bernardi, L. 2019). Additionally, it introduced an AI virtual assistant to answer common traveler questions. The search ranking algorithms are explicitly optimized for conversion (turning searches into bookings) – the platform's ranking system prioritizes listings that match user preferences and drive bookings (How to Optimize your Listing on Booking.com, internet source)	AI personalization yields a higher conversion rate on Booking.com. By showing travelers more relevant options (and quickly assisting via chatbot), Booking.com converts more searches into actual bookings, boosting revenue. The extensive use of AI (hundreds of models serving millions of users (Bernardi, L. 2019) has made the booking process more efficient and user-centric, contributing to Booking.com's strong position in online travel with improved customer satisfaction and booking volumes.
Revolut	*AI chatbots and automation in customer engagement; data-driven personalized financial insights.*	Fintech firm Revolut uses AI mainly to enhance customer support and engagement. It launched "Rita" – an AI chatbot inside its app to instantly handle customer queries. In a pilot, Rita resolved 20% of ~7,500 daily customer queries autonomously and achieved a high customer satisfaction score (4.3/5) (Peyton, A.,2017). This chatbot offloads routine inquiries and provides 24/7 assistance. Revolut also applies machine learning to analyze user transactions for fraud prevention and could tailor offers (e.g. credit or investment suggestions) based on user behavior, though its marketing focus is on seamless service.	Revolut's AI-driven support improves the customer experience and lowers service costs. By handling 20% of queries automatically (Peyton, A., 2017). Revolut can scale support without proportional headcount growth, leading to faster response times and happier customers. This efficient service (and trust from AI-powered fraud protection) aids customer retention and allows Revolut's marketing to emphasize reliable, smart service as a selling

The data summarized in Table 1 reveals a clear pattern: AI technologies have become deeply embedded in the strategic marketing architectures of industry-leading firms across diverse sectors - from e-commerce and entertainment to fintech and retail. While the specific applications vary (e.g.,

recommendation engines, predictive analytics, chatbots, dynamic pricing), a consistent outcome emerges:

1) Improved customer engagement and retention (e.g., Netflix, Spotify, Starbucks);
2) Greater marketing efficiency through automation and data-driven targeting (e.g., Amazon, Sephora, Booking.com);
3) Reduction in operational costs, including lower customer acquisition costs and fewer manual interactions (e.g., Revolut, Walmart);
4) Enhanced personalization at scale, resulting in stronger brand loyalty and higher customer lifetime value.

These examples confirm that artificial intelligence functions not merely as a collection of marketing tools, but as a strategic enabler of long-term competitive advantage. They further suggest that successful AI integration relies on more than just technological investment - it also demands organizational agility, robust data infrastructure, and a strong ethical governance framework.

Building upon these patterns, the following real-world cases offer a more granular look at how AI-driven personalization delivers measurable business value.

Dias and Lauretta (2024) emphasize that deep learning technologies have made hyper-personalization scalable, enabling firms to strengthen brand loyalty through precisely tailored interactions. For instance:

1. Netflix's recommendation engine is responsible for approximately 80% of viewer engagement, achieved through real-time analysis of viewing behavior (Gomez-Uribe & Hunt, 2016).
2. Spotify's AI-curated playlists, such as *Discover Weekly*, have led to a 50% reduction in churn by delivering individualized listening experiences (Spotify Technology, 2021).

These advancements underscore a paradigm shift from reactive to predictive marketing. AI's ability to forecast demand and optimize targeting not only boosts conversion rates but also slashes customer acquisition costs (CAC) - e.g., Sephora's AI-driven campaigns reduced CAC by 30% while increasing CLV (Forbes, 2023). Such efficiencies highlight AI's role in driving sustainable marketing performance, balancing short-term gains with long-term customer equity.

At the core of this transformation lies the capacity of AI to facilitate hyper-personalization. By analyzing millions of data points across multiple channels, AI systems can tailor messaging, pricing, and product recommendations with a degree of specificity previously unattainable. Numerous large-scale digital platforms have demonstrated the strategic value of AI-driven personalization in enhancing customer experience, increasing conversion rates, and reinforcing long-term brand attachment (Gentsch, 2022; Huang & Rust, 2021).

Beyond consumer-facing applications, AI is also revolutionizing strategic planning and resource allocation. Sophisticated models are now used to simulate market responses, optimize media spend, and forecast the return on investment for various campaign strategies. These models provide marketing executives with decision-support tools that are both data-driven and adaptive to fast-changing environments. Furthermore, Dias and Lauretta (2024) argue that AI integration into decision-making processes allows firms to simulate market responses and optimize media expenditures. These capabilities enhance resource efficiency and organizational performance, transforming strategic marketing into a more agile, evidence-based discipline. As a result, strategic marketing has become a more agile, responsive, and evidence-based discipline.

Empirical studies of AI implementation in leading multinational firms provide further insight into how artificial intelligence reshapes strategic marketing at both structural and behavioral levels. Huang and Rust (2021) emphasize that firms such as Amazon and Netflix exemplify the deployment of AI not merely as a support tool but as a core strategic enabler. At Amazon, recommender systems driven by collaborative filtering and deep learning algorithms have become integral to customer journey orchestration, contributing significantly to revenue optimization and cross-selling strategies

(Rust & Huang, 2021). These systems are not static; they adapt in real time based on consumer behavior, thus embodying the shift from transactional marketing to dynamic relationship-building models.

Similarly, Netflix's strategic use of AI in content recommendation and production exemplifies a shift in marketing - from predicting demand to actively shaping it. By leveraging continuous learning loops, the platform refines its algorithms based on real-time user data, delivering hyper-personalized experiences that boost loyalty and reduce churn. Beyond entertainment, industries like e-commerce (Amazon), music streaming (Spotify), and online education (Coursera) deploy deep learning for tailored recommendations, driving engagement and sales. In retail (Walmart, Sephora), travel (Booking.com), and fintech (Revolut), AI optimizes dynamic pricing, inventory management, and customer support. Dias and Lauretta (2024) further highlight cases in healthcare (personalized treatment plans) and automotive (predictive maintenance for Tesla), where AI enhances efficiency and satisfaction. This approach illustrates the use of AI to construct longitudinal value rather than short-term conversion gains.

Empirical studies from the retail and consumer goods sectors indicate that AI is being applied not only for interaction personalization but also for strategic product development, trend forecasting, and inventory optimization. AI-based diagnostic tools and machine learning models are now widely used to align marketing decisions with real-time customer preferences and localized demand patterns, contributing to greater operational responsiveness and strategic agility (Gentsch, 2022; Rust & Huang, 2021).

These examples reveal a broader trend: AI enables a reconceptualization of marketing not simply as communication, but as an adaptive system of value co-creation and strategic sensing. They also demonstrate the interplay between technological capacity and organizational culture. As noted by Teece (2007), firms that succeed in this context are those that develop dynamic capabilities - namely, the ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external competencies to address rapidly changing environments.

However, such strategic deployment is not without tensions. The reliance on algorithmic feedback loops may reinforce path dependency, limiting exploration of novel market spaces. Moreover, the standardization of AI tools across firms raises concerns regarding strategic differentiation. As more companies adopt similar machine learning infrastructures, the question of how to sustain unique value propositions becomes increasingly salient.

However, the successful deployment of AI in marketing is contingent upon organizational readiness. Research by Wamba-Taguimdje et al. (2020) suggests that companies often underestimate the internal transformation required to fully leverage AI. This includes investing in new skill sets, redefining roles and responsibilities, and reengineering workflows to accommodate iterative experimentation. Firms that have historically relied on rigid strategic planning cycles must now embrace a more fluid, test-and-learn approach that mirrors the agile methodologies of the tech sector.

Moreover, AI adoption frequently challenges traditional organizational hierarchies. As decision-making becomes increasingly automated and distributed, power shifts from senior managers to algorithmic systems or cross-functional teams that interpret and act on data insights. This decentralization demands new leadership models and a rethinking of strategic accountability. In many cases, the marketing function itself is being redefined - as both a consumer insights hub and a driver of enterprise-level digital strategy.

Despite these opportunities, the integration of AI into strategic marketing raises profound ethical and governance issues. The increasing reliance on personal data intensifies concerns over surveillance, consent, and discrimination. Algorithmic systems can unintentionally reinforce social biases, leading to unfair targeting or exclusion. Furthermore, the opacity of many AI models - particularly deep learning systems - complicates efforts to ensure transparency and explainability.

The Cambridge Analytica scandal remains a defining case study of how AI-driven microtargeting, when deployed unethically, can erode democratic institutions and public trust (Isaak & Hanna, 2018). This incident catalyzed scholarly calls for robust governance mechanisms, with Pasquale (2015) and Floridi et al. (2018) advocating for *algorithmic accountability* - frameworks that merge legal oversight with proactive ethical safeguards.

Building on this discourse, Dias and Lauretta (2024) systematically analyze sector-specific ethical risks in AI adoption, emphasizing the urgent need for regulatory guardrails. Their research identifies pervasive challenges, including data privacy violations, algorithmic bias, and exploitative consumer profiling, particularly in high-stakes domains like political advertising, healthcare, and fintech. For instance, biased credit-scoring algorithms (e.g., Apple Card's gender disparity in 2019) and racially skewed healthcare AI (Obermeyer et al., 2019) exemplify systemic harms that regulation must mitigate.

From a corporate standpoint, ethical failures in AI deployment carry severe consequences. Beyond legal penalties, they trigger reputational damage that can decimate brand equity - offsetting any short-term ROI. Examples like Meta's $725M Cambridge Analytica settlement and Amazon's scrapped biased hiring algorithm (2018) demonstrate how lapses precipitate crises. Conversely, firms prioritizing transparency (e.g., IBM's AI Ethics Board) gain consumer trust and long-term competitive advantage. Dias and Lauretta (2024) ultimately argue that ethical AI is not just a compliance hurdle but a strategic imperative, aligning with broader shifts toward stakeholder capitalism (World Economic Forum, 2020).

Another critical consideration is the potential strategic dependency on black-box algorithms. As organizations automate increasingly complex marketing functions, they risk losing the tacit knowledge and intuitive capabilities that underpin long-term strategic foresight. AI may optimize for immediate performance, but it is inherently limited in capturing the nuanced, value-laden, and sometimes paradoxical nature of human behavior. Consequently, leading scholars argue for a "hybrid intelligence" approach, wherein machines augment rather than replace human judgment (Brennen, 2020).

From a macroeconomic standpoint, the diffusion of AI technologies in marketing also has systemic implications. It may exacerbate competitive asymmetries between firms with advanced data infrastructure and those without. This raises questions about digital inequality and market concentration, with large tech-savvy corporations potentially monopolizing consumer attention and data ecosystems. Strategic marketing, in this context, becomes not just a business function, but a site of power and political economy.

Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic has further accelerated AI adoption by compelling firms to digitize rapidly. Remote operations, supply chain disruptions, and shifts in consumer behavior have highlighted the need for resilient, intelligent marketing systems. Companies that had previously invested in AI tools demonstrated greater agility and responsiveness during the crisis, reinforcing the strategic value of early technological adoption.

Taken together, these findings suggest that AI integration in strategic marketing is not a discrete innovation, but an ongoing process of organizational evolution. The most successful firms are those that align technological possibilities with clear ethical principles, cultivate adaptive capabilities, and maintain a strategic vision that balances efficiency with human-centered values.

Conclusion

The integration of artificial intelligence into strategic marketing signifies more than a technological upgrade; it represents a profound reconfiguration of how organizations conceptualize value creation, customer engagement, and market positioning. This study has shown that AI technologies - ranging from machine learning and predictive analytics to generative algorithms - are

now deeply embedded across the marketing value chain, driving a shift from reactive planning to anticipatory and adaptive strategic approaches.

At the heart of this transformation is a redefinition of strategic capabilities. Organizations are increasingly required to cultivate new forms of agility by merging data-driven decision-making with human-centered leadership. As AI systems automate operational functions and enable hyper-personalization, the role of marketers is evolving toward that of orchestrators, integrators, and ethical stewards. This transition demands not only technological investment but also a rethinking of organizational culture and structure.

The findings further highlight the emergence of new strategic challenges. Issues such as algorithmic opacity and ethical ambiguity raise important questions about control, accountability, and consumer autonomy. As intelligent systems increasingly mediate strategic marketing decisions, firms must navigate a delicate balance between efficiency and transparency, personalization and privacy. Mastering this complexity will be essential for sustaining both competitive advantage and reputational integrity in an era of heightened digital scrutiny.

Preparing for AI-driven transformation in marketing is not limited to adopting new tools - it requires a shift in mindset and daily practice. Marketers increasingly need to work confidently with data, collaborate with technical teams, and understand how algorithms shape customer interactions. At the same time, attention to ethical risks and legal boundaries becomes part of the strategic agenda. Flexibility and the willingness to experiment - rather than rely on rigid plans - are equally essential in today's rapidly evolving digital environment. These aspects are becoming integral to the professional skill set of marketers aiming to remain relevant and effective.

Although this article has addressed current trends, future research could extend the analysis by exploring the long-term impact of AI integration on brand equity, customer trust, and loyalty. Cross-industry and cross-cultural studies may also provide deeper insight into the institutional and societal dynamics of algorithmic marketing.

In conclusion, the effective integration of AI in strategic marketing hinges not solely on technological prowess, but on an organization's ability to align innovation with purpose, to pair governance with adaptability, and to harmonize artificial intelligence with human judgment and ethical responsibility.

Bibliography

1. Bernardi, L. (2019). *Machine Learning in production: the Booking.com approach.* Available at: https://booking.ai/https-booking-ai-machine-learning-production-3ee8fe943c70 [Accessed 31 Mar. 2025].
2. Bowen, G. A. (2009*). Document analysis as a qualitative research method*. Qualitative Research Journal, 9(2), pp. 27–40. https://doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/240807798_Document_Analysis_as_a_Qualitative_Research_Method [Accessed 27 Mar. 2025].
3. Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). *Using thematic analysis in psychology.* Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3(2), pp.77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235356393_Using_thematic_analysis_in_psychology [Accessed 26 Mar. 2025].
4. Brennen, S., Howard, Ph. N., & Nielsen, R.K. (2020). *An Industry-Led Debate: How UK Media Cover Artificial Intelligence*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. Available at: https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2018-12/Brennen_UK_Media_Coverage_of_AI_FINAL.pdf [Accessed 27 Mar. 2025].
5. Davenport, T. H., Guha, A., Grewal, D., & Bressgott, T. (2019). *How artificial intelligence will change the future of marketing.* Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 48, pp.24–42. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-019-00696-0 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/336430543_How_artificial_intelligence_will_change_the_future_of_marketing [Accessed 26 Mar. 2025].

6. Day, G. S., & Moorman, C. (2010). *Strategy from the outside Profiting from customer value*. McGraw Hill; 1st edition, 320 p. ISBN-10: 0071742298 ISBN-13: 978-0071742290
7. Dias, F.S., Lauretta, G.A. (2024).The Transformative Impact of AI and Deep Learning in Business: A Literature Review. https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2410.23443 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/385443052_The_Transformative_Impact_of_AI_and_Deep_Learning_in_Business_A_Literature_Review [Accessed 29 Mar. 2025].
8. Ek, D. (2022). *CEO Nouth America*. Available at: https://ceo-na.com/executive-interviews/spotify-not-your-typical-music-model/#:~:text=operating%20margin%20within%20the%20next,decade [Accessed 30 Mar. 2025].
9. Filipsson, F. (2025). *How Walmart Uses AI to Optimize Inventory Management.* Available at: https://redresscompliance.com/how-walmart-uses-ai-to-optimize-inventory-management/#:~:text= [Accessed 30 Mar. 2025].
10. Floridi, L., Cowls, J., Beltrametti, M., Chatila, R., Chazerand, P., Dignum, V., ... & Vayena, E. (2018). *AI4People - An Ethical Framework for a Good AI society: Opportunities, Risks, Principles, and Recommendations.* Minds and Machines, 28(4), pp.689–707. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11023-018-9482-5 https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11023-018-9482-5 [Accessed 27 Mar. 2025].
11. Forbes. (2023, March 15). *How Sephora's AI Strategy Is Rewriting the Rules of Beauty Retail*. Available at: https://www.forbes.com [Accessed 29 Mar. 2025].
12. Gentsch, P. (2019). *AI in marketing, sales and service: How marketers without a data science degree can use AI, big data and bots*. Springer; 1st ed. 2019 edition, 290 p. ISBN-10: 3319899562 ISBN-13: 978-3319899565
13. Gomez-Uribe, C. A., & Hunt, N. (2016). *The Netflix Recommender System: Algorithms, Business Value, and Innovation.* ACM Transactions on Management Information Systems (TMIS), 6(4), pp.1-19. https://doi.org/10.1145/2843948 https://dl.acm.org/doi/pdf/10.1145/2843948 [Accessed 27 Mar. 2025].
14. Hollebeek, L., Sprott, D., Andreassen, T. & Costley, C. (2019). *Customer engagement in evolving technological environments: Synopsis and guiding propositions.* European Journal of Marketing, *53*(9), pp.2018-2023. https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-09-2019-070 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335933015_Customer_engagement_in_evolving_technological_environments_Synopsis_and_guiding_propositions [Accessed 28 Mar. 2025].
15. *How to Optimize your Listing on Booking.com*. Available at: https://www.hostaway.com/blog/how-to-optimize-your-listing-on-booking-com/ [Accessed 31 Mar. 2025].
16. Huang, M.-H., & Rust, R. T. (2021). *A strategic framework for artificial intelligence in marketing.* Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 49(1), pp.30–50. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-020-00749-9 https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11747-020-00749-9 [Accessed 28 Mar. 2025].
17. Isaak, J., & Hanna, M. J. (2018). *User data privacy: Facebook, Cambridge Analytica, and privacy protection.* Computer, 51(8), pp. 56–59. https://doi.org/10.1109/MC.2018.3191268 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327025736_User_Data_Privacy_Facebook_Cambridge_Analytica_and_Privacy_Protection [Accessed 26 Mar. 2025].
18. Kapferer, J.-N. (2012). *The new strategic brand management: Advanced insights and strategic thinking* (5th ed.). Kogan Page Publishers. ISBN 978-0-7494-6515-5 https://books.google.md/books?id=JnK8pRjSGZUC&printsec=frontcover&hl=ru#v=onepage&q&f=false [Accessed 28 Mar. 2025].
19. Kyosovska, K. (2024). *Artificial Intelligence and Marketing. Ethical Dilemmas in the Bulgarian Professional Environment*. Postmodernism Problems, Vol 14, Nr.3, pp.270-291. https://doi.org/10.46324/PMP2403374 https://pmpjournal.org/index.php/pmp/article/view/427/332
20. Lemon, K. N., & Verhoef, P. C. (2016). Understanding customer experience throughout the customer journey. *Journal of Marketing, 80*(6), pp.69–96. https://doi.org/10.1509/jm.15.0420 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/304029900_Understanding_Customer_Experience_Throughout_the_Customer_Journey [Accessed 28 Mar. 2025].
21. MacKenzie, I., Meyer, C., & Noble S. (2013). *How retailers can keep up with consumers*. Available at: How retailers can keep up with consumers | McKinsey [Accessed 30 Mar. 2025].

22. Mustak, M., Salminen, J., Plé, L., & Wirtz, J. (2021). *Artificial intelligence in marketing: Topic modeling, scientometric analysis, and research agenda.* Journal of Business Research, 124, pp. 389–404. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.10.044 https://ideas.repec.org/a/eee/jbrese/v124y2021icp389-404.html [Accessed 26 Mar. 2025].
23. Obermeyer, Z., Powers, B., Vogeli, C., & Mullainathan S. (2019). *Dissecting racial bias in an algorithm used to manage the health of populations.* DOI: 10.1126/science.aax2342 Available at: https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.aax2342 [Accessed 27 Mar. 2025].
24. Pasquale, F. (2015). *The Black Box Society: The Secret Algorithms That Control Money and Information*. Harvard University Press, 260 p. EISBN 978-0-674-73606-1
25. Peyton, A. (2017). *Revolut rolls out Rita the chatbot greeter*. Available at: https://www.fintechfutures.com/digital-banking/revolut-rolls-out-rita-the-chatbot-greeter [Accessed 31 Mar. 2025].
26. Rust, R. T., & Huang, M.-H. (2014). The service revolution and the transformation of marketing science. *Marketing Science, 33*(2), pp.206-221. DOI:10.1287/mksc.2013.0836 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270504032_The_Service_Revolution_and_the_Transformation_of_Marketing_Science [Accessed 26 Mar. 2025].
27. Spotify Technology S.A. (2021). *Annual Report 2020* (Form 20-F). U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. Available at: https://investors.spotify.com [Accessed 29 Mar. 2025].
28. *Starbucks Uses AI-Powered Personalized Rewards to Boost Frequency and Spend. (2024).* Available at: https://www.pymnts.com/news/loyalty-and-rewards-news/2024/starbucks-uses-artificial-intelligence-powered-personalized-rewards-boost-frequency-check-size/ [Accessed 30 Mar. 2025].
29. Teece, D. J. (2007). Explicating dynamic capabilities: the nature and microfoundations of (sustainable) enterprise performance. *Strategic Management Journal, 28*(13), pp.1319–1350. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/smj.640 [Accessed 28 Mar. 2025].
30. Varadarajan, R. (2010). *Strategic Marketing and Marketing Strategy: Domain, Definition, Fundamental Issues and Foundational Premises*. Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 38(2), pp.119–140. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-009-0176-7 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/225485091_Strategic_Marketing_and_Marketing_Strategy_Domain_Definition_Fundamental_Issues_and_Foundational_Premises [Accessed 27 Mar. 2025].
31. Wamba-Taguimdje, S.-L., Wamba, S. F., Kamdjoug, J. R. K., & Wanko C.E.T. (2020). *Influence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on Firm Performance: The Business Value of AI-based Transformation Projects.* Business Process Management Journal ahead-of-print(ahead-of-print). DOI:10.1108/BPMJ-10-2019-0411 Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340210925_Influence_of_Artificial_Intelligence_AI_on_Firm_Performance_The_Business_Value_of_AI-based_Transformation_Projects
32. Wedel, M., & Kannan, P. K. (2016). *Marketing Analytics for Data-Rich Environments*. Journal of Marketing, 80(6), pp. 97–121. https://doi.org/10.1509/jm.15.0413 https://www.scirp.org/reference/referencespapers?referenceid=2066905 [Accessed 27 Mar. 2025].
33. *World Economic Forum, 2020*. Available at: https://www.weforum.org/ [Accessed 29 Mar. 2025].
34. Yingchia Liu, Yang Xu, & Shiji Zhou (2024). *Enhancing User Experience through Machine Learning-Based Personalized Recommendation Systems: Behavior Data-Driven UI Design*. Applied and Computational Engineering 112(1), pp.42-46. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/386513037_Enhancing_User_Experience_through_Machine_Learning-Based_Personalized_Recommendation_Systems_Behavior_Data-Driven_UI_Design [Accessed 30 Mar. 2025].

UDC: 338.1
JEL Classification: O11
https://doi.org/10.54481/ecosoen.2025.1.05

IMPACT OF SWORDS OF IRON WAR ON ISRAELI ECONOMY

ВЛИЯНИЕ ВОЙНЫ «ЖЕЛЕЗНЫХ МЕЧЕЙ» НА ЭКОНОМИКУ ИЗРАИЛЯ

SIROTA Julia, PhD, Carmel College, Academic Consultant,
Haifa, Israel
ROR: https://ror.org/02wvcn790
Institutional E-mail: juliap@yvc.ac.il
ORCID: 0009-0007-6688-2295
E-mail personal: jsirota1976@gmail.com

KHALAILA Jomana, Pedagogical Counselor,
PhD student of Ion Creangă Pedagogical State University,
Chisinau, Republic of Moldova
ROR: https://ror.org/05aqyve98
ORCID: 0009-0004-4591-7514
E-mail personal: jomana_kh_1988@hotmail.com

СИРОТА Юлия, доктор философии, Кармель-колледж,
академический консультант,
Хайфа, Израиль
ROR: https://ror.org/02wvcn790
Институциональный e-mail: juliap@yvc.ac.il
ORCID: 0009-0007-6688-2295
Личный e-mail: jsirota1976@gmail.com

ХАЛАЙЛА Джомана, педагогический консультант,
докторант Педагогического государственного университета имени Иона Крянгэ,
Кишинев, Республика Молдова
ROR: https://ror.org/05aqyve98
ORCID: 0009-0004-4591-7514
Личный e-mail: jomana_kh_1988@hotmail.com

Abstract: *The "Swords of Iron" war, which began in 2023 and is still ongoing, is expected to have a significant negative impact on the Israeli economy. Both the direct costs of the war – including weapon procurement and the mobilization of reservists – and indirect costs, such as the evacuation of residents, rehabilitation of the Western Negev, and disruptions to production and consumer demand, are estimated to total approximately 200 billion NIS.*

As a consequence, Israel experienced a 10% decline in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the final quarter of 2023 and recorded zero annual growth for the year. To mitigate further economic damage, it is imperative for the government to assume responsibility by reallocating sectoral budgets and channeling additional resources toward supporting the war effort.

Аннотация: *Война "Железные мечи", начавшаяся в 2023 году и продолжающаяся в настоящее время, ожидаемо оказывает значительное негативное влияние на экономику Израиля. Как прямые расходы на ведение войны – включая закупку вооружения и мобилизацию резервистов, – так и косвенные расходы, такие как эвакуация жителей, восстановление Западного Негева и перебои в производстве и потребительском спросе, оцениваются примерно в 200 миллиардов шекелей.*

В результате в последнем квартале 2023 года Израиль столкнулся с падением валового внутреннего продукта (ВВП) на 10% и нулевым годовым ростом. Чтобы смягчить дальнейший экономический ущерб, правительству необходимо взять на себя ответственность, перераспределить отраслевые бюджеты и направить дополнительные ресурсы на поддержку военных усилий.

Keywords: *"Swords of Iron" War; Israeli Economy; Economic Impact; Short-Term and Long-Term Effects.*

Ключевые слова*: "Железные мечи"; экономика Израиля; влияние на экономику; краткосрочные и долгосрочные последствия.*

Conflict of interest
The author declares that there is no conflict of interest
Article received: **19.05.2025**
Accepted for publication: **06.06.2025**
Published: 27.06.2025

Conflict de interese
Autorul declară că nu are niciun conflict de interese.
Articol primit: **19.05.2025**
Acceptat pentru publicare: **06.06.2025**
Publicat: **27.06.2025**

Sirota Julia, Khalaila Jomana, 2025

Introduction

Terrorism, broadly defined as "the use of violence against non-combatants to achieve political or ideological aims" (Ganor, 2015), has long sought to disrupt civilian life and undermine national economies. For many years, despite repeated conflicts between the Israeli Army and Hamas – particularly since the Second Intifada in the early 2000s – Israel's economy demonstrated remarkable resilience.

However, this pattern shifted dramatically with the onset of the "Swords of Iron" war in 2023. The unprecedented intensity of the conflict, the massive mobilization of reserve forces, and its prolonged duration have exerted profound pressure on Israel's economic stability.

Today, alongside the visible military front, an equally critical economic front has emerged. This includes two primary challenges: first, the direct costs of financing the war effort, namely the procurement of weaponry and the deployment of reservists; and second, the indirect economic consequences, such as the reconstruction of the Western Negev, mass evacuations near Gaza and Lebanon borders, and a sharp contraction in consumer spending – developments that severely impact Israel's business sector.

Materials and methods of research

The research methodology was based on a qualitative triangulation approach, utilizing cross-validation of data from multiple sources. Primary data were drawn from official government reports, central bank publications, and policy briefs, while secondary data were obtained from peer-reviewed academic studies and institutional analyses.

To ensure methodological rigor, the data were systematically compared and synthesized, allowing for the identification of consistent patterns and minimizing the risk of single-source bias. All stages of the research process were conducted in accordance with recognized ethical standards, including the principles of transparency, accountability, and respect for intellectual property rights.

Results and considerations

Israeli economy before and after the beginning of "swords on iron" war

In order to examine economic domain, we need to present the situation before the beginning of the war. Before the 7-th of October of 2023, the economy of Israel was very good according to well-recognized measures for macro-economic situation of countries (INSS). The debt-to-GDP ratio fell by 7.1 percent in 2022 and reached almost 61 percent - its pre-pandemic level. The unemployment rate was only 3.5 percent; the inflation reduced to 3.8 percent; The Bank of Israel's foreign exchange reserves amounted to over 200 billion dollars. The significant decline in foreign investment in high-tech in the first three quarters of the year contributed to the depreciation of the shekel, with the dollar rate standing at 3.85 shekels. Despite this, the growth forecast for 2023 was relatively good compared to developed countries, at three percent, equivalent to about one percent growth per capita.

Although the situation was good enough, the "swords of iron" did shake the macro-economy and will probably impact in the future (Atar, 2024; INSS). This impact is also expected to continue as the current situation of fighting on only one front at high intensity, for a number of reasons, including:

1. In order to reach the war's goals, the weapon is needed. The IDF is using heavier fire than ever before, which requires a large amount of ammunition. The intensity of the war also requires greater use than ever of "Iron Dome" interceptors, mainly, but also of "Arrow 3." As of early December 2023, there were about eleven thousand launches into Israel from all fronts (Dombrowski et.al., 2013; Elster et.al., 2019).
2. The use of the conscription of nearly 350,000 reserve soldiers subtracts about seven percent of the labor force in the economy. The effect is actually twofold: both manpower that is difficult to replace in the workplace and payments that the state must make to the reserve soldiers.
3. Evacuations of 125,000 residents require subsidies for housing and living expenses for the evacuees (Bastelica, 2020).
4. Compensation to residents whose property was damaged by rocket fire on Israel (Shmueli, 2008).
5. Financial assistance for workers and businesses affected by the war, from unemployment benefits to compensation for loss of income as a result of the fighting (Vashchenko et.al.,2024).
6. A decrease in state revenues both due to lower income tax revenues and a halt in foreign direct investment.

The following graph presents Israeli GDP over years since 2000 till 2024. There were various wars and operations, the Covid-19 pandemic had its impact, however till now Israeli economy was able to recover:

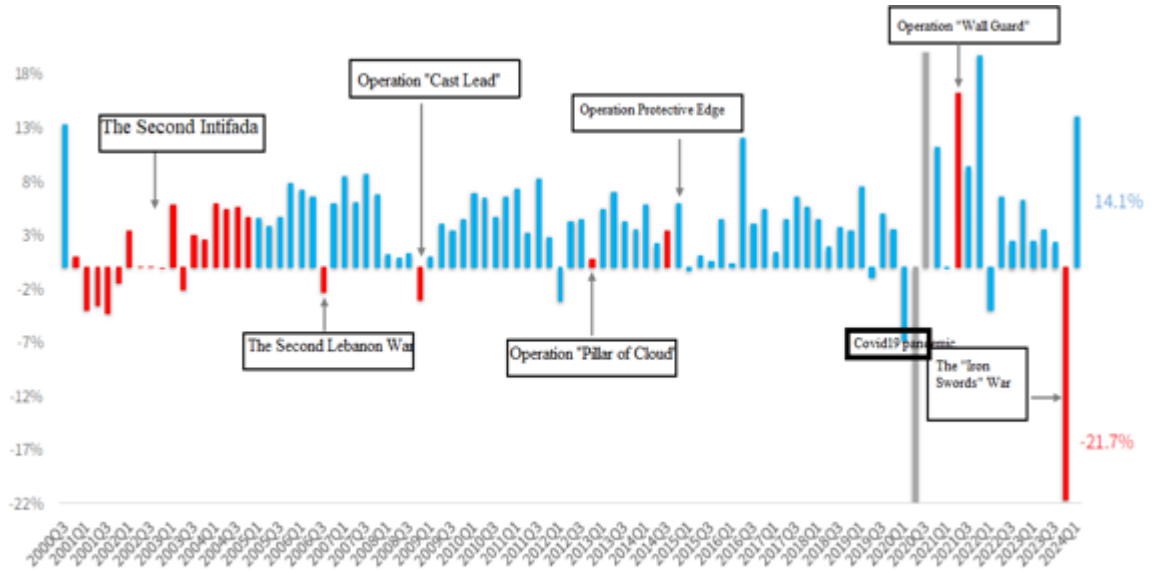

Figure 1. Israeli GDP rate of change, %

Source: Bank of Israel (developed by INSS)

Actually, the macro-economic shock is expressed in both supply and demand sides of the economy. From the demand side, there was a reduction in credit cards use, varying over different regions of Israel. In the evacuated cities, like Kiryat Shmona, the use of credit cards in the first week of November 2023 declined in 80 percent, whereas in cities like Tel Aviv and Raanana the decline reached about 20 percent. The variance is also expressed in different production sectors. For example, in the first weeks of the war, there was a sharp increase of about 40 percent in spending at food chains, while the entertainment and leisure industry barely existed in October 2023 (INSS). On the supply side, there have been difficulties in producing various products and services, as many workers are in the reserves, many foreign workers have left the

country, and thousands of Palestinian workers from Judea and Samaria do not have permission to enter Israel. All of this is causing difficulties in supplying products, which is exacerbated by difficulties in importing – among other things, due to problems importing products by sea as a result of the Houthi threat (INSS).

Israeli ratings decline and impact on Israeli households

A GDP contraction of about 10 percent in the fourth quarter of 2023 and a decline in annual growth to two percent in 2023 (i.e., zero growth in GDP per capita terms). In addition, the higher public spending is expected to lead to a deficit of over five percent in the government budget, which will increase the expected debt-to-GDP ratio to 64 percent by the end of 2023 (Atar, 2024).

The following graph presents deficit and growth forecasts for 2024 and 2025 according to different major economic experts:

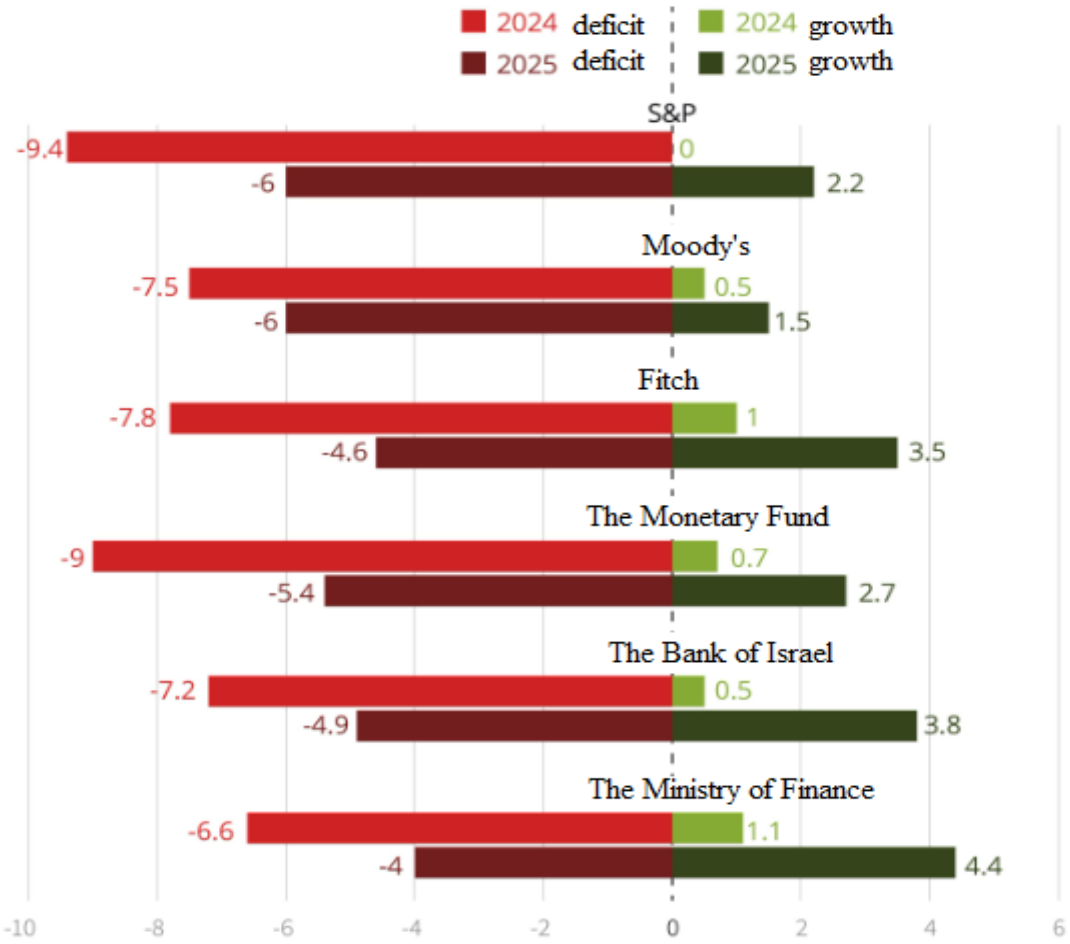

Figure 2. Deficit and growth forecasts for 2024 and 2025 according to different major economic experts

Source: INSS

In the current period, when the three major credit rating companies, Moody's, Fitch, and Standard & Poor's, have already placed Israel's credit rating on negative watch, budgetary responsibility must be demonstrated (INSS). For if these companies see that there are no significant cuts appropriate for the current times, and instead there are unreasonable allocations of funds, conveying "business as usual" when coalition considerations outweigh national considerations, then the credit rating will drop. The Israeli citizens already felt this drop in their economic situation and their support of the war is gradually getting down. The credit rating that a country receives from the rating agencies reflects its ability to repay debts and loans that country takes out. The higher the rating a country receives, the more likely it is that the country will repay its debts,

and vice versa. Therefore, Moody's and Fitch decision to downgrade Israel's credit rating expresses concern that the State of Israel will have difficulty repaying its debts in the future (Atar, 2024). As Moody's notes, the credit rating downgrade and the negative outlook for a further downgrade are a result of the October 7 war and the fear of escalation in the north against Hezbollah. At the same time, the report also shows that Moody's is concerned about the way Israel's economic policy is being managed, and it can certainly be assessed that more responsible and sober conduct by Israel's economic leadership could have prevented the downgrade. In any case, without going into depth about the reasons that led to Israel's downgrade, it can be estimated that the downgrade will affect all households (Atar, 2024).

First, Israel will pay higher interest on future loans it takes out and on the repayment of existing loans. Paying higher interest will leave less money for the civil services the state provides, in the areas of education, health, welfare, and infrastructure (Ujhelyi, 2014). Ratings by agencies are also used by investors around the world to assess the risks and opportunities of their investment decisions. A downgrade reflects an increase in the risk of investing in Israel, certainly relative to other alternatives in the world. Accordingly, the concern is that a downgrade will lead to a decrease in the volume of investments in Israel. It is worth remembering that already in 2023, and before the October 7 war, there was a sharp decline in the volume of investments in Israeli high-tech, and therefore Moody's decision does not bode well for continued investments in Israeli high-tech in general. It should be remembered that the high-tech industry is responsible for about a quarter of tax revenues in Israel, and about 12% of employees. Therefore, reducing investments in high-tech may lead to a decrease in the state's tax revenues, an increase in unemployment and indirectly to harm the state's ability to offer civil services at a decent level to the country's residents. Finally, the credit rating downgrade is expected to lead to an increase in long-term interest rates and an increase in variable-rate mortgage payments paid by households, and indirectly to a weakening of the shekel and a further increase in the cost of living (Atar, 2024).

According to Shein (2024), Israel’s economy has not returned to its pre-war level of output, and Israel’s government’s debt is increasing to pay for the war. The long run effect of the war will depend on its outcome, but there is potential for a very negative economic effect since the war might cause or contribute to a brain drain of young and talented Israelis. Israel is very vulnerable to a brain drain since it has many high-tech workers who have a comparatively easier time in re-locating to new countries than other workers since with their skills, they should be able to find well-paying jobs in other countries.

Monetary Policy Overview

During the reviewed period, the monetary policy was primarily geared toward mitigating uncertainty and stabilizing financial markets, with a particular focus on the foreign exchange market. In parallel, the policy remained committed to preserving price stability and supporting overall economic activity. By January 2024, when the interest rate decision was made, signs of improvement in both geopolitical and economic conditions were observed, despite the prevailing uncertainty. This represented a notable shift from the sentiment during the decisions made in October and November 2023 (Bank of Israel). However, rising geopolitical tensions and renewed inflationary pressures in the following months led the Monetary Committee to keep the interest rate unchanged through July 2024, with continued focus on market stability, reducing uncertainty, and sustaining economic support. GDP grew by 3.4% in Q1 2024, signaling recovery, but remained 2.7% below prewar levels. Recovery slowed in Q2, with construction and tourism sectors particularly affected by labor shortages and weak demand. The unemployment rate, which spiked in October, declined and stabilized by Q2 but remained above prewar levels, as did the employment rate. Wages rose over the past year, accompanied by improved labor productivity in the business sector (Bank of Israel). During the first half of 2024, the inflation rate declined but remained within the price stability target range (1–3%). By the end of the period, year-over-year inflation stood at 2.8%. However, one-year inflation expectations rose throughout the half-year and hovered near the upper bound of the target range. The following figure presents forward inflation expectations derived from the capital market:

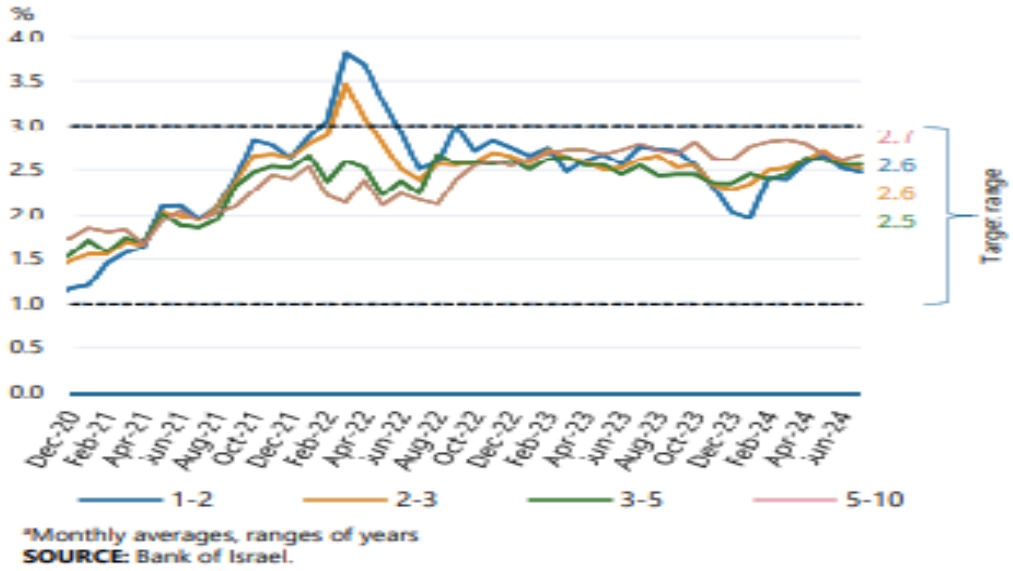

Figure 3. Forward inflation expectations derived from the capital market.

Source: Bank of Israel

Exchange Rate Developments

Over the reviewed half-year, the exchange rate was primarily driven by geopolitical events. A significant depreciation of the shekel followed the outbreak of the war, prompting intervention by the Bank of Israel, which led to a sharp appreciation by the end of 2023. In the first half of 2024, the NIS/$ exchange rate fluctuated with high volatility, influenced mostly by geopolitical uncertainty, and remained slightly below its prewar level for much of the period. By the end of the half year, the shekel had experienced a slight depreciation overall, with the exchange rate increasing from 3.6 to 3.7 (Bank of Israel). The following figure presents the exchange rate at the period of 2021-2024:

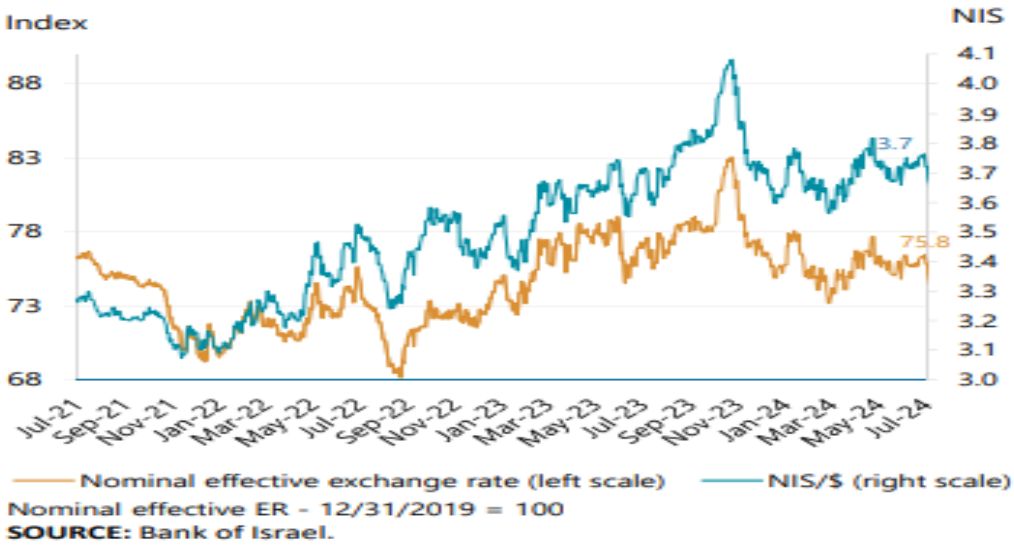

Figure 4. The nominal exchange rate NIS/$.

Source: Bank of Israel

International relations with Turkey

Although no formal announcement has been made, Turkish ports have begun enforcing a ban on exports to Israel's Haifa and Ashdod ports. Simultaneously, Israeli imports arriving at Turkish ports are reportedly being denied unloading. Since April 1, unofficial restrictions have been observed, with agents

citing government orders and customs systems showing error messages specifically for exports to Israel. The move effectively halts trade flows between the two countries, despite the absence of an official decree (Elmas, 2024). During a joint press conference with German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan declared, "We no longer maintain close commercial ties with Israel, it's over." This statement marks a significant shift in relations, possibly signaling a real break in trade ties. Business leaders in Turkey are noting the gravity of this moment, with some recalling that even during the intense Marmara Gaza flotilla crisis in 2010, such a sharp break in commercial relations was not seen (Elmas, 2024).

Defense companies' boom

The ongoing war in Israel is part of a broader pattern of escalating geopolitical conflicts worldwide, including the Russia-Ukraine war and growing tensions in East Asia over China's increasing strength. In response, many countries are ramping up defense budgets, benefiting defense companies with rising demand. Ben-Israel (2025) mentions the following challenges and changes in the defense strategies and weapons:

1. Redefining Superpowers: The traditional notion of superpowers is being challenged. States like Iran exert significant regional and global influence not through conventional strength but via proxy networks and asymmetric warfare (Abbas et.al.,2021).
2. Expanded Battlefields: Modern conflicts are no longer confined to physical territories – they extend across cyber and informational domains, creating simultaneous, multi-layered battlefields (Smith, 2014).
3. Evolving Nature of War: Warfare now involves complex scenarios with both state and non-state actors. Groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah – which are classified as terrorist organizations by countries including the U.S. and the EU (Koss,2018) – demonstrate military capabilities once reserved for state armies (Berti, 2016).
4. Technological Disruption: Technological advancements are disrupting traditional military hierarchies and enabling non-state actors to gain strategic advantages, contributing to the blurring of lines between conventional and irregular warfare (Pierce, 2004; Raska, 2019).

According to a recent survey by Oppenheimer analysts, the geopolitical, technological, and military shifts occurring globally are the most significant and rapid in the past 85 years (Habib-Valdhorn,2024). Oppenheimer analysts highlight that countries such as China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea are actively seeking opportunities to alter the global order. The investment bank views this shift as structural, implying that if the US and its allies wish to maintain global dominance, and they will need to invest substantial resources into technology to strengthen their military capabilities. Israeli defense companies listed on the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange have capitalized on the global geopolitical trend, reporting $1 billion in new contracts both domestically and internationally. These companies, operating in various defense sectors, are experiencing a prolonged period of business growth due to rising demand driven by escalating global tensions.

Conclusions

From a strategic long-term perspective, immediate and responsible economic reforms are essential to prevent Israel from experiencing a prolonged period of economic stagnation, similar to the decade following the Yom Kippur War until the stabilization program of 1985. The "Swords of Iron" war has already inflicted significant short-term economic damage, and without decisive fiscal and structural measures, the risks of deepening economic deterioration remain high.

To avoid such negative developments, the government must demonstrate fiscal discipline, prioritize critical sectors, and reallocate resources efficiently to strengthen economic resilience. This includes managing public spending responsibly, supporting private sector recovery, and encouraging foreign and domestic investments despite heightened geopolitical risks.

Strategically, the events of October 7, 2023, exposed vulnerabilities comparable to those revealed fifty years earlier. However, while the surprise was military in nature, its economic consequences are equally profound. Timely and effective policy actions today could prevent the repetition of past mistakes and secure the foundations for Israel's long-term economic stability and growth.

Bibliography

1. Abbas, M., & Shah, H. J. (2021). *Declining us status as a superpower: Implications for the world order.* Margalla Papers, 25(1), pp. 131-142. Available at: DOI:10.54690/margallapapers.25.1.57. [Accessed 08 Apr. 2025].
2. Atar, I. (2024). *Israel's credit rating downgrade will affect all households. The Israeli Institution of Democracy. (Hebrew).* Available at: https://www.idi.org.il/articles/52900 [Accessed 28 Mar. 2025].
3. Bank of Israel. Monetary Policy Report First Half of 2024. Available at: https://www.boi.org.il/en/communication-and-publications/regular-publications/monetary-policy-reports/monetary-policy-report-first-half-of-2024/ [Accessed 06 Apr. 2025].
4. Bastelica, A. (2020). *Inequities in Disaster Evacuations for Low-Income Families: A Policy Analysis. Fels Institute of Government.* Available at: https://www.fels.upenn.edu/sites/default/files/2023-04/BastelicaCapstone.pdf. [Accessed 06 Apr. 2025].
5. Ben-Israel, G. M. (2025). *Deconstructing Warfare: Redefining Superpowers, Battlefields, Wars, and Armies.* International Relations Theory and Philosophical Political Insights Into Conflict Management. IGI Global Scientific Publishing. pp. 175-208. Available at: https://www.igi-global.com/chapter/deconstructing-warfare/370913. [Accessed 08 Apr. 2025].
6. Berti, B. (2016). *What's in a name? Re-conceptualizing non-state armed groups in the Middle East.* Palgrave Communications, 2(1), pp. 1-8. Available at: https://www.nature.com/articles/palcomms201689.pdf. [Accessed 02 Apr. 2025].
7. Dombrowski, P., Kelleher, C., & Auner, E. (2013). *Demystifying iron dome*. The National Interest, (126), pp. 49-59. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/257267886_Demystifying_Iron_Dome. [Accessed 27 Mar. 2025].
8. Elmas, D.S. (2024). *Turkey Bans Exports of All Goods to Israeli Ports*. Globes, May 2. Available at: https://en.globes.co.il/en/article-turkey-bans-exports-of-all-goods-to-israeli-ports-1001477830. [Accessed 22 Mar. 2025].
9. Elster, Y., Zussman, A., & Zussman, N. (2019). *Effective Counter-Terrorism: Rockets, Iron Dome, and the Israeli Housing Market.* Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, 38(2), pp. 308-337. Available at: DOI:10.1002/pam.22114. [Accessed 02 Apr. 2025].
10. Ganor, B. (2015). *Global Alert: The Rationality of Modern Islamist Terrorism and the Challenge to the Liberal Democratic World*. Columbia University Press, 240 p. ISBN 978-0-231-53891-6.
11. Habib-Valdhorn, Shiri. (2024). *Publicly Traded Israeli Defense Companies See Boom in Orders*. Globes, September 5. Available at: https://en.globes.co.il/en/article-publicly-traded-israeli-defense-companies-see-boom-in-orders-1001488519. [Accessed 07 Apr. 2025].
12. Fadlon, T., Klor, E. The Israel-Hamas War: *Averting Another Lost Economic Decade. publications.* The Institute of National Security Studies (INSS). Available at: https://www.inss.org.il/he/publication/war-economy/ [Accessed 06 Mar. 2025].
13. Koss, M. (2018). *Resistance, power and conceptions of political order in Islamist organizations: Comparing Hezbollah and Hamas*. Routledge. 238 p. ISBN 9781032095844.
14. Pierce, T. (2004). *Warfighting and disruptive technologies: Disguising innovation*. Routledge. 284 p. ISBN 9780415701891.
15. Raska, M. (2019). *Strategic competition for emerging military technologies*. Prism, 8(3), pp. 64-81. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/26864277?seq=1. [Accessed 05 Apr. 2025].
16. Schein, A. (2024). *The effects of the Gaza War on Israel's economy: one year on*. Israel Affairs, 30(5), pp. 1-14. Available at: DOI:10.1080/13537121.2024.2422157 [Accessed 21 Mar. 2025].
17. Shmueli, D. F. (2008). *Environmental justice in the Israeli context.* Environment and Planning A, 40(10), pp. 2384-2401. DOI:10.1068/a39389. Available at:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/23539957_Environmental_Justice_in_the_Israeli_Context [Accessed 20 Mar. 2025].
18. Smith, R. P. (2014). *The economic costs of military conflict*. Journal of Peace Research, 51(2), pp. 245-256. Available at: DOI:10.1177/0022343313496595. [Accessed 28 Mar. 2025].
19. Ujhelyi, G. (2014). *Civil service rules and policy choices: evidence from US state governments.* American Economic Journal: Economic Policy, 6(2), pp. 338-380. Available at: https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/pol.6.2.338. [Accessed 21 Mar. 2025].
20. Vashchenko, K., Kokhan, N., Zytsyk, S., & Shevchenko, I. (2024). *Impact of war on labour relations: Impact on civil and labour law enforcement, compensation, annual leave and accountability*. Multidisciplinary Reviews, 7. Available at: DOI:10.31893/multirev.2024spe040. [Accessed 05 Apr. 2025].

1.2. SOCIAL SCIENCES
1.2. ȘTIINȚE SOCIALE

UDC: 376.1:159.9+37.015.3
https://doi.org/10.54481/ecosoen.2025.1.06

PECULIARITIES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

PARTICULARITĂȚILE SUPORTULUI PSIHOLOGIC ȘI PEDAGOGIC PENTRU COPIII CU NEVOI SPECIALE

CHERNENKO Nataliia, Doctor of Pedagogy, Professor
South Ukrainian National Pedagogical University named after K. D. Ushynsky,
Department of Educational Management and Public Administration, Odesa, Ukraine
ROR: https://ror.org/05wvagp91
ORCID: 0000-0003-2288-8824
Personal E-mail: chernenkonatali2016@gmail.com

BRYNZA Iryna, Candidate of Psychological Sciences, Associate Professor
South Ukrainian National Pedagogical University named after K. D. Ushynsky,
Department of General and Differential Psychology, Odesa, Ukraine
ROR: https://ror.org/05wvagp91
ORCID: 0000-0001-7159-6639
Personal E-mail: biryna3691@gmail.com

Annotation: *The article presents an analysis of the results of psychological and pedagogical work with children with special educational needs carried out within the author's Inclusive Program, implemented in an extracurricular format. Information is provided on the content and specific features of the author's Inclusive Program for Children with Special Educational Needs. Empirical data from both quantitative and qualitative analyses are examined according to selected mental criteria (cognitive, emotional-volitional, behavioral, and linguistic), which are reflected in the psychodiagnostic component of the study. The obtained empirical results allow us to assert that correctional programs for children with special needs (in an out-of-school educational format) can include not only individual sessions but also group activities involving children of different nosologies and ages.*

Adnotare: *Articolul prezintă o analiză a rezultatelor activității psihologice și pedagogice desfășurate cu copiii cu cerințe educaționale speciale în cadrul Programului Incluziv elaborat de autor și implementat în format extracurricular. Sunt oferite informații privind conținutul și particularitățile acestui Program Incluziv pentru copiii cu necesități speciale. Datele empirice obținute — din analize cantitative și calitative — sunt examinate în funcție de criterii psihologice selectate (cognitive, emoțional-volitive, comportamentale și lingvistice), reflectate în componenta psihodiagnostică a cercetării. Rezultatele empirice permit concluzia că programele de intervenție pentru copiii cu cerințe speciale (într-un format educațional nonformal) pot include nu doar activități individuale, ci și activități de grup, care implică copii de vârste și tipologii diferite.*

Keywords: *children with special educational needs, psychological and pedagogical support, inclusive education, out-of-school education, inclusive program.*

Cuvinte-cheie: *copii cu cerințe educaționale speciale; suport psihologic și pedagogic; educație incluzivă; educație nonformală; program incluziv.*

Conflict of interest
The author declares that there is no conflict of interest
Article received: 28.04.2025
Accepted for publication: 06.06.2025
Published: 27.06.2025

Conflict de interese
Autorul declară că nu are niciun conflict de interese.
Articol primit: 28.04.2025
Acceptat pentru publicare: 06.06.2025
Publicat: 27.06.2025

© Chernenko Nataliia, Brynza Iryna, 2025

Introduction

In modern conditions, there is a rapid increase in the number of children from vulnerable social categories who require enhanced psychological and pedagogical support and special attention. Compared to previous years, the number of such children has grown significantly. Professional activity with children with special educational needs requires specialists – teachers, psychologists, speech therapists, social educators, and tutors – not only to possess deep theoretical knowledge, but also to master modern practical tools, demonstrate the ability to cooperate in multidisciplinary teams, and remain sensitive to the individual needs of each child.

Inclusive education is increasingly recognized by society not as an additional or temporary component, but as a fundamental part of the educational process. Its implementation contributes to the humanization of learning, the development of individuality, and the formation of each student's personality in accordance with their abilities. A special role in this process is played by the teacher, whose personality should foster in students the skills of cooperation, mutual support, respect for diversity, and readiness for interaction. It is the teacher who is responsible for creating an atmosphere of acceptance, trust, and safety in the educational environment.

Inclusive education has a powerful social effect, as it helps overcome prejudices and stereotypes about children with special educational needs. It provides them with the opportunity to fully participate in the educational process, develop communication skills, and enhance social adaptation through interaction with peers. At the same time, important moral qualities are formed in other children – tolerance, empathy, and respect for differences (Kalinina, 2022; Shpak, 2021; Yarmola, 2020).

The implementation of inclusive education requires a systematic approach and cooperation among all participants in the educational process, state and public organizations, scientists, and human rights institutions. Such partnership enables the justification of new innovative changes and ensures their effective implementation, promoting the development of each child’s potential (Yarmola et al., 2020; Mozgova, 2020; Kalinina et al., 2022; Saiko, 2022; Shpak, 2021).

In June 2024, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approved the National Strategy for the Development of Inclusive Education until 2029, as well as the Operational Action Plan for 2024–2026. The National Strategy defines a new paradigm of educational policy aimed at creating a safe, accessible, and high-quality educational environment for all participants in the educational process, regardless of their individual needs. In particular, it provides for increasing the level of inclusiveness in educational institutions, improving the conditions for educational service provision for children with special educational needs, and creating opportunities for the professional development of teachers (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2024).

Of particular importance in the implementation of inclusion is the organization of psychological and pedagogical support, which should aim at developing the child’s personal potential, facilitating adaptation to the social environment, forming positive self-esteem, and enabling the realization of individual capabilities. In recent pedagogical theory and practice, the concepts of “psychological and pedagogical support” and “socio-pedagogical support” have been actively used, emphasizing an interdisciplinary approach to assisting the child (Kalinina, Samoilov, & Kondratenko, 2022).

The analysis of modern educational practice, particularly in primary school, indicates the growing relevance of high-quality support for primary school–age children with special educational needs. This issue is examined by both Ukrainian and foreign scholars, including T. Azarova, E. Aleksandrovsky, E. Afanasiev, M. Bytyanova, N. Vasilyeva, I. Gafurov, O. Lvova, O. Matveeva, O. Rudyakova, L. Shipitsyna, and others. Researchers emphasize that properly organized support ensures a smoother integration of the child into the social environment and contributes to emotional comfort.

Effective psychological and pedagogical support involves the implementation of a holistic system of measures, among which the key components are psychological and pedagogical diagnostics, psychological support, correctional and developmental work, assistance in mastering the curriculum, and cooperation with parents and teachers to create a favorable developmental environment. The specificity of such work lies in an individual approach to each child, taking into account their age-related, cognitive, emotional, and physical characteristics (Kalinina et al., 2022).

Thus, inclusive education is not only a social project or an educational strategy but also a profound philosophy of mutual respect, participation, and equal opportunities. Its implementation requires coordinated cooperation among all stakeholders in the educational process, as well as support from the state, civil society, and the scientific community, combined with a high level of professionalism and empathy on the part of teachers.

In the context of inclusive education, special attention should be paid to socio-pedagogical support which, according to modern scientific approaches (Saiko, 2022; Obukhivska, 2017; Illiashenko, 2017), is viewed as a component of interdisciplinary interaction among the social pedagogue, psychologist, teachers, the child, and the child's family. Its goal is to create favorable conditions for effective social adaptation, integration, and development of the child in the school environment and in society as a whole.

The main areas of socio-pedagogical support include developing socially significant knowledge among parents, individualizing the child's developmental environment, fostering constructive communication between teachers and children, and supporting positive interaction styles within the group. Within this activity, the social pedagogue performs a number of essential functions: diagnosing the child's developmental characteristics, studying the social context and needs, predicting potential difficulties, developing a support strategy, providing counselling to families and teachers, preventing risks of social isolation and stigmatization, and coordinating cooperation among all involved specialists (Obukhivska, 2017).

The principle of interdepartmental cooperation is particularly important, as it ensures coordinated activities among representatives of the educational, social, medical, and legal spheres, thereby enabling comprehensive assistance to a child with special educational needs and their family.

Within scientific and practical approaches to organizing social and pedagogical support, A. Obukhivska (2017) proposed a structured algorithm that includes primary diagnostics of the child's readiness for learning: observation of behavioral manifestations, examination of interests, needs, and motives, development of an individual development program, and selection of adequate pedagogical methods. O. Zinchenko, in turn, emphasizes supporting educational activities, while O. Leshchenko stresses the importance of teamwork among specialists.

In the practice of general secondary and preschool education institutions, such a team-based model is implemented through cooperation among teachers, teaching assistants, psychologists, social pedagogues, special educators, medical professionals, and parents. A central coordinating role is played by the practical psychologist, who ensures communication between all support agents and monitors compliance with an individualized approach for each child.

Social and pedagogical activity in the context of inclusive education is designed not only to provide support for children with special educational needs, but also to activate the educational potential of all social institutions, promote socialization and adaptation, and foster the formation of active citizenship among the younger generation. One of the main directions of modern educational strategy for children with special needs remains the development of inclusive education as a fundamental element of the educational environment, providing equal access to quality education (Yarmola et al., 2020). At the same time, it is important to consider the role of out-of-school education, which creates additional opportunities for the creative, emotional, and social development of the child.

The system of out-of-school education institutions – circles, sections, clubs, inter-school educational and production complexes, schools of social rehabilitation, and cultural, educational, sports, and health institutions – performs a significant socializing function. It not only complements academic education, but also contributes to identifying and developing the child's individual potential, supporting their integration into society, and fostering a sense of belonging and self-realization in a safe and stimulating environment.

An integral part of quality support is the creation of an Individual Development Program (IDP), which takes into account the child's educational, psychological, social, and physical needs. Such a program is developed by a multidisciplinary support team that includes a teacher, practical psychologist, social pedagogue, teaching assistant, parents, and, if necessary, a speech therapist, medical professionals, rehabilitation specialists, and other experts. The effectiveness of the IDP is ensured through systematic monitoring of the child's development and adaptation dynamics, as well as flexible adjustment of the program in accordance with changes in the child's condition and needs.

Domestic scientific and pedagogical literature (Saiko, 2022; Yarmola, 2020) emphasizes the importance of integrating the internal resources of educational institutions with the capacities of the external social environment – in particular, Inclusive Resource Centers (IRCs), public organizations, volunteer initiatives, cultural and educational institutions, and spiritual and medical structures. This model of cooperation makes it possible to create a holistic support environment that ensures sustainable child development not only within school, but also in everyday life.

In the context of full-scale military aggression against Ukraine, the problem of psychological and pedagogical support for children has gained new significance. Children who have experienced traumatic events, loss of housing or loved ones, or who are internally displaced, require special attention. In such cases, it is extremely important not only to provide psychological rehabilitation, but also to ensure stability and safety within the educational process, creating a trusting environment in which the child can restore self-confidence and feel supported by adults.

The purpose of the article is to present the results of a theoretical and empirical study on psychological and pedagogical work with children with special educational needs based on the author's Inclusive Program, which was implemented in an extracurricular format.

Materials and methods of research

The article presents the results of psychological and pedagogical work with children participating in the Inclusive Program for Children with Special Educational Needs. The Inclusive Program was designed to support children with speech development disorders of functional or organic origin in their socialization and integration into society, to help them achieve psychological balance, and to facilitate their natural separation from parents or guardians.

The study involved 151 children aged 3 to 8 years, representing the following categories: internally displaced persons (IDPs) – 39 children (25.8%), children in difficult life circumstances (SLOs) – 112 children (74.2%), and children with various nosologies. Work with children was carried out from June 1 to October 31, 2023, and four groups were formed in Odesa and the Odesa region. Summary information on the social status of participants in the Inclusive Program is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary matrix of the social status of participants in the Inclusive Program for children with special needs

	Group 1	**Group 2**	**Group 3**	**Group 4**
IDPs	13 (33%)	16 (39%)	9 (20%)	1 (3.8%)
SLOs	26 (67%)	25 (61%)	36 (80%)	25 (96.2%)

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
Disability	11 (42.3%)	11 (44%)	27 (60%)	2 (8%)
Large families	7 (27%)	5 (20%)	8 (17.5%)	23 (92%)
Without parents	1 (3.8%)	3 (12%)	–	–
Single mothers	4 (15.4%)	6 (24%)	1 (2%)	–
Families without work	3 (4.5%)	–	–	–
Total	39 (100%)	41 (100%)	45 (100%)	26 (100%)

Note: IDPs – internally displaced persons; SLOs – children in difficult life circumstances.

Table 2. Summary matrix of the social status of participants in the Inclusive Program for children with special needs

		Group1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
IDPs		13 (33%)	16 (39%)	9 (20%)	1 (3,8%)
LSS:		26 (67%)	25 (61%)	36 (80%)	25 (96,2%)
	Disability	11 (42,3 %)	11 (44%)	27 (60%)	2 (8%)
	Large	7 (27%)	5 (20%)	8 (17,5%)	23 (92%)
	without parents	1 (3,8%)	3 (12%)	-	-
	Single mothers	4 (15,4%)	6 (24%)	1 (2%)	-
	Families without work	3 (4,5%)	-	-	-
Total number of people		**39 (100%)**	**41 (100%)**	**45 people (100%)**	**26 (100%)**

The Inclusive Program for children with special needs consisted of two main blocks: diagnostic and correctional.

When selecting the methods, activities, and techniques used during program implementation – particularly during individual and group sessions – medical conclusions, children's diagnoses, and correctional recommendations were taken into account. The most common methods and activities used in the correctional block included logorhythmics, mnemonics, articulation and breathing exercises, finger gymnastics, motor games, psychogymnastics, speech development sessions, literacy classes, exploration of the surrounding world and natural environment, artistic activities, self-massage using natural materials, Su-Jok therapy, and exercises aimed at psycho-emotional and muscular relaxation.

According to the correctional plan, each child was scheduled for 6 hours of sessions per week (24 hours per month and up to 144 hours over six months). Attendance was documented in the program schedule and confirmed by signatures of parents and specialists conducting the sessions. The average duration of active participation per child ranged from 30 to 45 minutes, depending on age, diagnosis, adaptation level, and type of activity (individual session, group session, or therapeutic exercise). The age range of participating children was 3 to 8 years.

For the diagnostic block, psychometrically grounded classical and expert diagnostic methods were selected, aimed at assessing children's mental functions and psycho-emotional state. Three measurement criteria were used: cognitive, emotional-volitional, and behavioral.

Cognitive criterion was assessed using the following indicators: perception, thinking, attention, general awareness, memory, speech.

Emotional-volitional criterion included: emotional arousal/inhibition; anxiety/calmness; aggressiveness/balance.

Behavioral criterion included: activity/inactivity; ability to perform tasks; contact/non-contact with others.

Results and considerations

In this article, we present an example of quantitative and qualitative analysis from only one group of children who participated in the Inclusive Program. To verify the effectiveness of the remedial classes, a mathematical analysis was conducted on the results obtained before the beginning of the intervention and after its completion. A comparative assessment of the development of children's mental functions – namely cognitive, emotional-volitional, behavioral, and speech components – clearly illustrates the following tendencies.

Figures 1 and 2 show the distribution of values for the cognitive components of children's mental development in the first and second assessments.

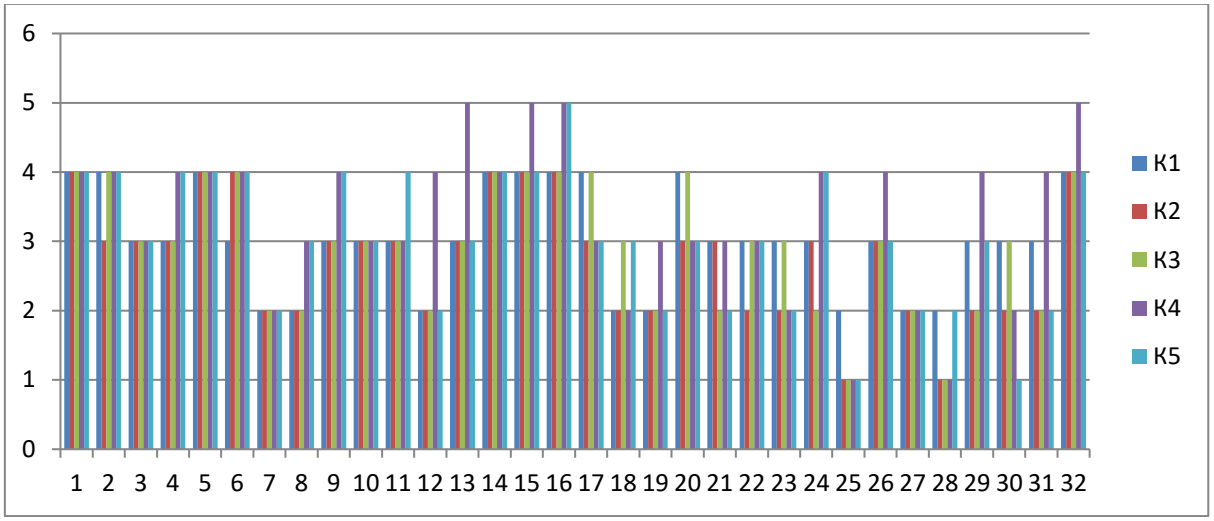

Figure 1. Histogram of the distribution of values of cognitive components of children's mental development (1st assessment)

Notes: K1 – perception, K2 – thinking, K3 – attention, K4 – awareness, K5 – memory.

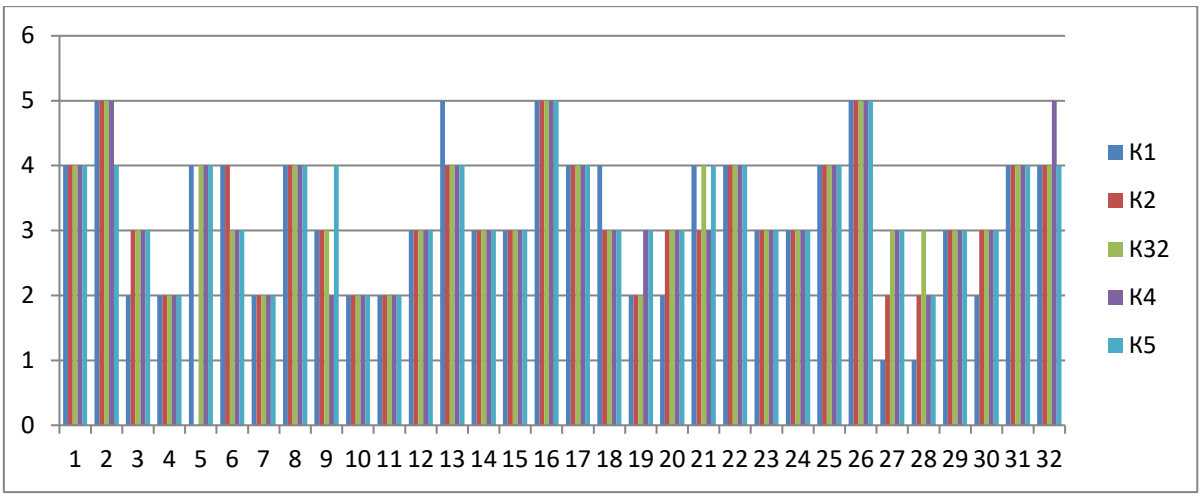

Figure 2. Histogram of the distribution of values of cognitive components of children's mental development (2nd assessment)

Visual analysis clearly shows that there were no significant differences in the parameters under study (see Fig. 1 and Fig. 2). The data indicate that children with speech development disorders

also exhibit insufficient cognitive development. In this group, 20% of children demonstrate very low cognitive functioning, reflected in the inability to establish simple cause-and-effect relationships, poorly formed visual perception, and inability to perform elementary analysis and synthesis. Additional indicators include limited understanding of basic directed speech, an inability to sustain attention, low awareness of the surrounding world, and an almost complete lack of memory and expressive speech.

The remaining children show partial impairment of cognitive and speech functions and are generally at low or below-average developmental levels. None of the children demonstrate sufficient cognitive development.

It should be noted that the purpose of this study did not include correcting cognitive functioning. These components of mental development were assessed to illustrate the relationship between thinking and speech processes.

Figures 3 and 4 present the distribution of values for the emotional-volitional and behavioral components in the first and second assessments.

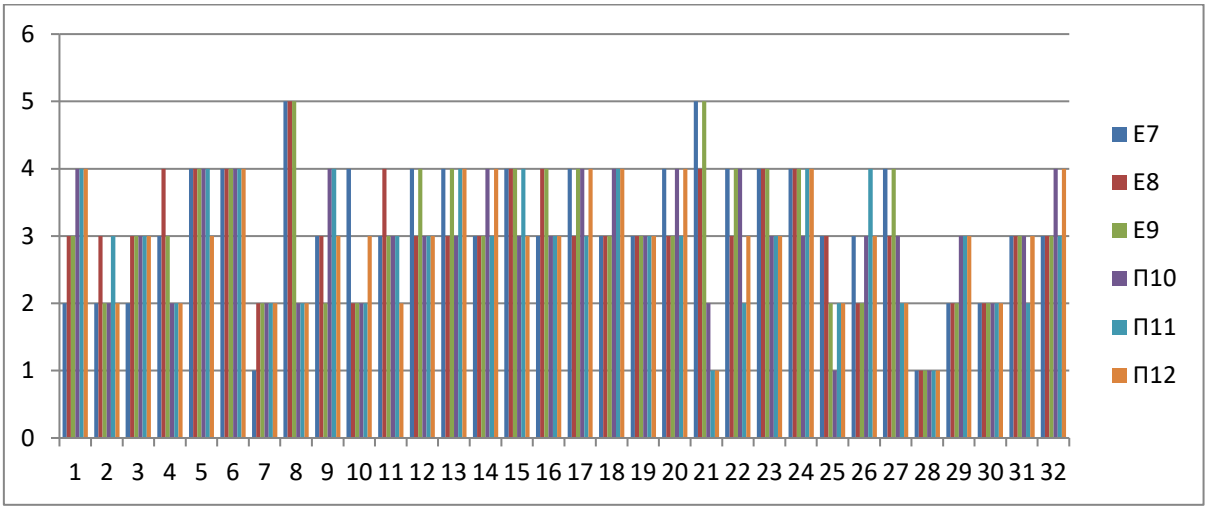

Figure 3. Histogram of the distribution of values of the emotional and behavioural-volitional components of children's mental development (1st assessment)

Notes: E7 – agitation, E8 – anxiety, E9 – aggressiveness; P10 – activity, P11 – efficiency, P12 – contact.

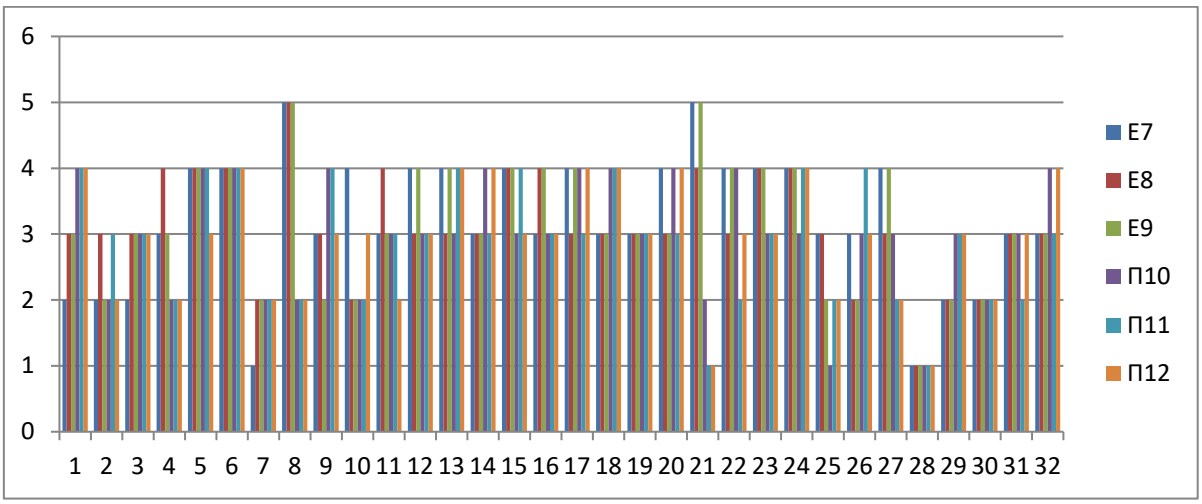

Figure 4. Histogram of the distribution of values of the emotional and behavioural-volitional components of children's mental development (2nd assessment)

As shown in Fig. 3, all children in this group exhibit a significant disturbance in the emotional-volitional sphere. Half of the children (50%) display anxiety, emotional agitation, and aggressive behavior.

Furthermore, significant behavioral difficulties are observed: children are inactive, require constant stimulation from adults, and depend heavily on parental support. Low performance and limited contact with others are characteristic of all participants.

A comparison of the results (see Fig. 4) shows that after the intervention, most children demonstrated decreased levels of agitation, anxiety, and aggressiveness. Children became more productive and more willing to establish contact.

Figures 5 and 6 present the distribution of values for the speech component of children's mental development in the first and second assessments.

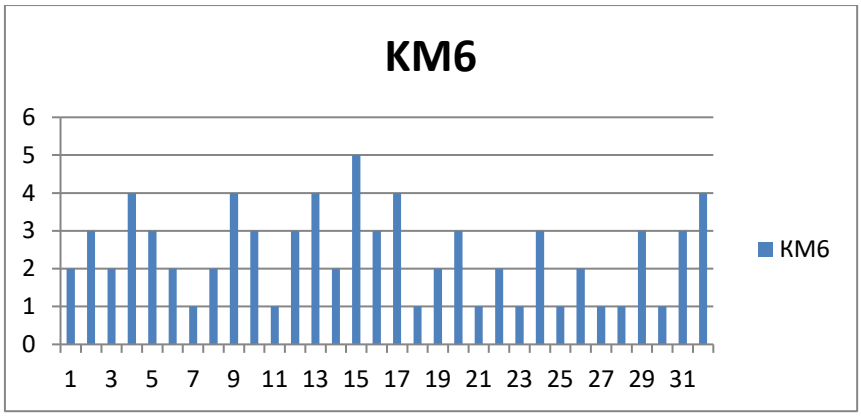

Figure 5. Histogram of the distribution of values of the speech component of children's mental development (1st assessment)

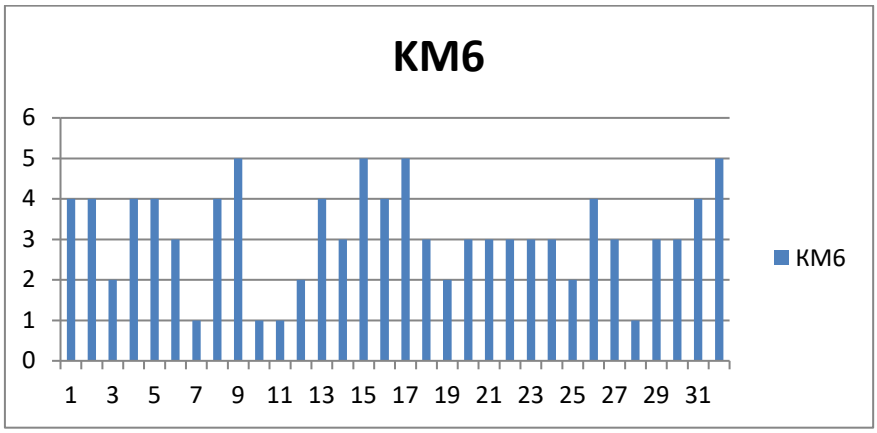

Figure 6. Histogram of the distribution of values of the speech component of children's mental development (2nd assessment)

Visual analysis of the presented histograms clearly demonstrates an improvement in speech development in most children (emergence of new sounds, new words, and simple sentence formation). However, in some children no noticeable changes were recorded. This is explained by the irregular attendance of planned classes (frequent absences due to parents' inability to maintain a stable schedule) as well as by the deep severity of their speech delay.

In Table 2, the results of the quantitative analysis after the remedial classes with children with special needs are presented.

Table 2. Summary results of quantitative analysis after remedial classes in a group of children with special needs

Child's code	Number of hours (total)	Status	Nosology	Results
1.1	32	IDP	TSD (Typical Speech Disorders)	After the classes, a positive trend in the development of active speech is observed, but it is still insufficient for this age. The use of the "A" sound before responses has decreased. In group activities, he began to participate more actively.
1.2	48	IDP	ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder)	The boy attended classes for three months. A positive result is seen in his interest in didactic games. There is no speech, although he shows objects on request. Low concentration; he quickly loses interest. The correctional work has a positive effect on his development.
1.3	80	IP	Speech impairment	During attendance, he became more lively and active and began to communicate with both adults and peers. Pronunciation has become clearer, but still does not correspond to age norms. Overall, he shows a sufficient level of development.
1.4	32	IDP	TSD	The boy's emotional state has improved; new words have appeared. He knows and names nouns and adjectives and performs actions on request. Further development of speech and sound correction are required. Leading activities are unchanged. The emotional sphere still needs correction.
1.5	48	IDP	Complex developmental disorders	The boy is not speech-impaired, but shows a very low overall result. He does not understand or follow instructions and is apathetic. The parents have finally consulted a neurologist.
1.6	48	IDP	ASD	The examination showed very slight positive dynamics in the emotional-volitional sphere. He is very anxious, constantly runs away, fights, and often refuses tasks. Sometimes he performs only those tasks he chooses. The words "mom", "I don't want", "no", "give it back" have appeared. Parents do not seek help from doctors.
1.7	56	IDP	Intellectual disabilities	No significant positive changes in speech, but an increase in active vocabulary is noted. The emotional state remains low; it is very difficult for him to get used to peers.
1.8	16	IDP	ASD	No clearly good results after three months, but there is some positive dynamics. He establishes eye contact and shows interest in tasks, but quickly becomes tired and loses interest.
1.9	16	IDP	Intellectual disabilities	Positive dynamics are observed, but due to insufficient parental involvement in upbringing and education, the boy is far behind age norms. Unfortunately, the child moved back to the Mykolaiv region.

Child's code	Number of hours (total)	Status	Nosology	Results
1.10	16	IDP	Severe speech impairment	The girl uses words correctly according to their meaning. Endings in case forms have appeared. She has become more active and proactive and independently initiates dialogue with peers and adults. Knowledge of the surrounding world has improved.
1.11	16	IDP	Mental retardation	He has learned, to some extent, to make contact with peers in class. He shows more effort and works together with the group. The work pace has increased due to teamwork. Attention is unchanged (distractible); constant adult support is required.
1.12	16	IDP	Mental retardation	The boy has become calmer and is able to maintain attention on important tasks. In communication with others, he waits for his turn and addresses the adult by raising his hand. He began to use simple means of communication independently and more actively uses speech to establish friendly relations.
1.13	16	IDP	Severe speech impairment	He is able to sit through a 40-minute lesson and performs all tasks. He enjoys communicating with peers. Speech has become slightly better, but is still poorly understood. Correctional classes have had a positive effect on his development.
1.14	26	Large family	Mental retardation + Severe speech impairment	Pronunciation has improved and become relatively clear. He now sits through the entire lesson (40 minutes), but tasks must be changed frequently to maintain interest. The level of cognitive activity has increased; attention and task focus have improved.
1.15	32	Large family	Severe speech impairment + Intellectual disabilities	After a series of classes, the boy easily completes tasks and helps peers. He works quickly on tasks requiring visuospatial representation and visual analysis. Further speech development, emotional-volitional correction, and medical intervention are required.
1.16	32	Large family	Mental retardation	There is very low dynamics in speech development. The phonemic aspect remains unchanged. Phonetically, the sounds P and P' have appeared. He rewrites text and begins to read syllables with familiar letters. Emotional-volitional indicators have improved; he responds better to directed speech and behavior has improved. Cognitive activity is unchanged.
1.17	32	Large family	Severe speech impairment	Over six months, speech has improved, but word endings and prepositions are still absent. When asked to speak more clearly, he withdraws. When speaking slowly, all words can be understood. The child is positive and engages in work with interest. Cognitive and emotional-volitional spheres are at an average level.

Child's code	Number of hours (total)	Status	Nosology	Results
1.18	32	Large family	Speech disorders	Speech is clear; the sounds P and P' have appeared. She attends classes with pleasure. She can compose short stories based on pictures. She completes tasks slowly. The boy has become slightly more confident and more cheerful in group activities and task performance.
1.19	32	Large family	Intellectual disabilities	A positive trend in pronunciation is observed. The child pronounces words more clearly and begins to speak in complex sentences. There is some positive dynamics in learning letters and writing them. Attention is unchanged; he tires quickly and does not show initiative. He fabricates stories and deceives. Parents are advised to see a child psychiatrist, but have not yet done so.
1.20	16	Large family	Speech disorders	The boy is shy and quiet and needs a long time to get used to people. He shows interest in others. There is still no automation of the L and R sounds, and there is a fixation on incorrect pronunciation. There is positive dynamics in enriching active vocabulary.
1.21	28	Difficult life circumstances	Severe speech impairment + Mental retardation	Positive dynamics in speech development are noted. Three main sounds have appeared, which he combines into syllables. Due to a difficult family situation, additional classes with correctional specialists are needed. The emotional sphere remains unchanged.
1.22	16	Difficult life circumstances	Mental retardation	The girl improved fine motor skills through finger gymnastics and various didactic exercises. She shows activity and communicative skills; phonemic hearing has improved. There are difficulties in understanding Ukrainian. In class, she stands out due to her creative ideas and originality in problem-solving. She is very slow and emotionally immature and needs correction of the emotional-volitional sphere.
1.23	32	Difficult life circumstances	Speech disorders	After three months of classes, there is a positive trend toward correct sound positioning and enrichment of active vocabulary. She began to show interest in group classes.
1.24	16	Difficult life circumstances	Severe speech impairment	A slight trend toward normalization of pronunciation is observed. Due to rapid speech, it is difficult for the child to pronounce all sounds and words correctly. However, when repeating words, gradual progress is noticeable. Some behavioral improvement is also present.
1.25	56	Difficult life circumstances	Speech disorders	Very small positive changes in development are observed. Active vocabulary has increased, but is not age-appropriate. The child does not always understand directed speech and does not always complete proposed tasks correctly.

Child's code	Number of hours (total)	Status	Nosology	Results
1.26	96	Difficult life circumstances	Severe developmental disorders	Positive developmental changes are noted. The boy began to focus on work, perform tasks more carefully, and understand simple instructions from adults. Continued correction of the emotional-volitional sphere and cognitive development is required.
1.27	32	Difficult life circumstances	ASD	The boy showed very good developmental progress. After three months, there was a surge in speech. He does not respond to his name, and when wanting to address an adult, he takes their hand. He does not establish eye contact. He attends all specialists' classes with interest, performs tasks, and can invent games for himself.
1.28	16	Difficult life circumstances	Intellectual disabilities + Hearing impairment	Communicates using verbal and non-verbal means, initiates communication independently, and has improved dialogical competence: asks and answers questions. Communication with peers and adults has improved.
1.29	48	With disabilities	Severe developmental disorders	Speech development has remained unchanged. The child very rarely completes tasks proposed by adults. Low concentration and loss of interest in others are observed. The emotional-volitional sphere is not formed. Parents are encouraged to see a child psychiatrist, but refuse.
1.30	16	With disabilities	Mental retardation + Stuttering	Stuttering negatively affects the child's emotional state. However, in group classes she relaxes, begins to pronounce words, and expresses her opinion, which positively influences her general condition.
1.31	72	With disabilities	Severe developmental disorders	He began to understand simple instructions. There is still no speech, only vowel sounds (A, U). There is no contact with children; he screams and hides in a corner. He makes contact with adults after a long adaptation. He likes familiar games. Needs constant correction.
1.32	96	With disabilities	Severe developmental disorders	There is slight interest in classes and some toys. He stopped running out of the room and can remain engaged for up to 20 minutes (with changes in didactic material). Babbling has appeared. He can play independently. He likes fine motor exercises and games with balls and pins. There is no significant progress in development.
1.33	32	With disabilities	Intellectual disabilities + Visual impairment	Speech remains unchanged. Active vocabulary has been supplemented with inappropriate ("bad") words; he does not understand what to say and when in communication with adults and peers. He enjoys group classes and has started seeking contact with children, but does not know behavioral norms. Cognitive development remains at a very low level. Requires constant communication with peers.

Child's code	Number of hours (total)	Status	Nosology	Results
1.34	96	With disabilities	Severe developmental disorders	No changes in overall development. The child has frequent epileptic seizures, which strongly affect development. Specialists regularly visit the child at home and work under the supervision of the grandmother. The child recognizes them, rejoices when seeing them, manipulates toys, and tries to complete tasks with an adult.
1.35	32	With disabilities	Intellectual disabilities + Severe speech impairment	Positive changes are observed only in behavior. He began to communicate more with peers, and they started attending classes together. Pronunciation remained unchanged; his voice is quiet and uncertain. Some cognitive progress is present, as he observes others and performs tasks. However, the level of development does not match age norms.
1.36	72	With disabilities	Severe developmental disorders	During classes, he began to show aggression toward parents. Alone with a specialist, he has hysterical reactions; once he calms down, he performs some tasks. There is no progress, but some regression associated with frequent epileptic seizures. Parents pay sufficient attention to treatment and education, but no developmental dynamics are observed.
1.37	72	With disabilities	Severe developmental disorders	There is no speech; babbling has appeared. He performs tasks hand-over-hand with the specialist. He enjoys simple exercises with a balloon and gymnastic ribbon, as well as fine motor exercises (with a massage ball). Emotions such as crying and laughter have appeared. Development does not correspond to age; there is almost no progress.
1.38	72	With disabilities	Severe developmental disorders	Very calm; there is no speech, only some vowel sounds (A, U, O). Positive dynamics in fine motor development: can assemble a pyramid and complete tasks with bushings. He does not like outdoor games, tires quickly, and prefers working with pencils. Requires constant corrective work.
1.39	32	With disabilities	Severe speech impairment + Visual impairment	Sound pronunciation has improved; dysgraphia is present. Attention is unstable; he is inattentive, very easily distracted, and performs tasks quickly and carelessly. The emotional state in class is positive. He attends with pleasure, comes independently, and likes to help other children.

The results of the quantitative analysis after the correctional classes with children with special needs show positive changes in their psychological state, namely:

- Boy (child code 1.4): His emotional state improved, and new words appeared. He knows and names nouns and adjectives and performs actions on request. Further development of speech and sound articulation correction are required. His activity level remains unchanged, and the emotional sphere still needs adjustment.

• Girl (1.10): She uses words correctly by meaning, and endings in case forms have appeared. She became more active and proactive, independently initiating dialogue with peers and adults. Her knowledge of the surrounding world has improved.

• Boy (1.12): He became calmer and able to sustain attention on important tasks. During communication with others, he began to wait for his turn and addresses adults by raising his hand. He independently uses simple means of communication and more actively uses speech to establish friendly relations.

• Girl (1.22): Her fine motor skills improved due to finger gymnastics and various didactic exercises. She is active and communicative, and her phonemic hearing has improved. She experiences difficulties understanding Ukrainian. In class, she stood out for her creative ideas and originality in problem-solving. She remains very slow and emotionally immature and requires correction of the emotional-volitional sphere.

• Boy (1.35): Positive changes are evident only in behavior. He began to communicate more with peers and started attending classes together with them. Pronunciation remains unchanged; his voice is quiet and uncertain. Some progress is observed in the cognitive sphere, as he observes others and performs tasks; however, his overall development does not meet age-related norms.

Thus, according to the results of both quantitative and qualitative analyses, it can be noted that not all children were able to master the correctional program. The main reasons include:

• clinical diagnosis, particularly the degree of deviation from normative speech development and the level of intellectual impairment;

• age-related limitations, since older children have less plasticity of speech-related mental functions and therefore fewer opportunities for correction;

• insufficient attendance, as not all parents were able to maintain a stable schedule, leading to absences and reduced program effectiveness.

Conclusions

1. The necessity and significance of inclusive education – which ensures conditions for the full development of every child, regardless of individual abilities, both in school and out-of-school settings – have been substantiated.

2. It has been demonstrated that effective support for children from vulnerable groups becomes particularly relevant in the context of social challenges caused by the hostilities in Ukraine. Such support requires an individualized approach, interdisciplinary collaboration among specialists, active family involvement, and the use of modern technologies in both school and out-of-school education systems.

3. The author's Inclusive Program for children with special educational needs was developed and implemented, consisting of two blocks: diagnostic and correctional. The diagnostic block included psychometrically grounded classical and expert methods designed to assess children's mental functions according to cognitive, emotional-volitional, behavioral, and speech criteria. The correctional block incorporated commonly used methods, activities, and techniques such as logorhythmics, mnemonics, articulation and breathing exercises, finger gymnastics, motor games, psychogymnastics, speech-development and literacy classes, familiarization with the world and nature, pictorial activities, self-massage with natural materials, Su-jok therapy, and exercises for psycho-emotional and muscular relaxation. Classes were conducted both individually and in groups.

4. Psychological and pedagogical support within the author's Inclusive Program was provided not only to children but also to their parents, who received consultations, guidance, and recommendations tailored to the needs of their child. This support was aimed at facilitating the adaptation of children with special educational needs to new educational and developmental environments, fostering their abilities and skills, and establishing social relationships.

5. Based on the psychological and pedagogical support of children with different nosologies and ages, the implemented Inclusive Program had a positive impact (confirmed through quantitative and qualitative analysis) on speech development, socialization, integration into peer environments, achievement of emotional balance, and natural separation from parents or guardians.

6. The empirical and methodological experience obtained indicates that correctional programs for children with special educational needs can successfully incorporate group sessions that include children of different ages and nosologies. Such formats facilitate easier adaptation to new (age-diverse) environments, improve emotional regulation, enhance peer interaction, and reduce dependence on residual care from parents or guardians – particularly among children from internally displaced families.

7. Prospects for further development of psychological and pedagogical support for children with special needs in Ukraine include strengthening teachers' professional training, expanding resource support within both school and out-of-school educational institutions, and fostering an inclusive culture in society.

Bibliography

1. Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. (2024, June 7). *On approval of the National strategy for inclusive learning development until 2029 and the operational plan for its implementation for 2024–2026 (Resolution No. 527-r).* Kyiv: Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. Available at: https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/527-2024-%D1%80#Text zakon.rada.gov.ua [Accessed 21 Mar. 2025].
2. Degtyarenko, T. V., & Kostiuk, O. Yu. (2021). *Features of psychological support in the upbringing of children with perceptual-cognitive developmental disorders*. Psychological Sciences: Problems and Achievements, 3(17), pp.82–97.
3. Degtyarenko, T. V., & Kovylina, V. H. (2022). *Psychophysiology of development*. Kyiv: Academy of Sciences of Higher Education of Ukraine, 327p. Available at: https://dspace.pdpu.edu.ua/bitstream/123456789/16384/1/Dehtiarenko%20Tetiana%20V%D0%BElodymyrivn%D0%B0.pdf [Accessed 21 Mar. 2025].
4. Dokuchina, T. O. (Ed.). (2020). *Psychological support of inclusive education*. Kamianets-Podilskyi: Kamianets-Podilskyi National University named after Ivan Ohiienko. 172p.
5. Kalinina, L. M., & Ivanova, N. I. (2022). *Psychological-pedagogical foundations of support for children with special educational needs*. Kyiv: Education of Ukraine.
6. Kalinina, T. S., Samoilova, I. V., & Kondratenko, V. O. (2022). Psychological-pedagogical support of younger school-age children with special educational needs in inclusive education. *Scientific Bulletin of Uzhhorod National University. Series: Psychology*, (4), 124–128. https://doi.org/10.32782/psy-visnyk/2021.4.24 [Accessed 24 Mar. 2025].
7. Lytvyn, I. M., & Havrylenko, T. L. (2020). *Psychological-pedagogical support of children with special educational needs in the New Ukrainian School environment*. Cherkasy: Cherkasy Regional Institute of Postgraduate Education. Available at: https://lib.iitta.gov.ua/id/eprint/725021/ [Accessed 28 Mar. 2025].
8. Obukhivska, L. V. (2017). *Social-pedagogical support of children with special needs in an inclusive environment.* Scientific Bulletin of Kherson State University. Series "Psychological Sciences", 2(3), pp.115–120.
9. Saiko, N. O. (2022). Social-pedagogical support of children with special needs in extracurricular education institutions. *Scientific Bulletin of Uzhhorod National University*, 23–27. Available at: https://doi.org/10.32782/psy-visnyk/2022.5.4 [Accessed 20 Mar. 2025].
10. Saiko, O. M. (2022). *Inclusive education in Ukraine: Current trends and challenges*. Problems of Modern Pedagogy, 7(47), pp.29–34.
11. Shpak, M. M. (2021). *Psychological support of children with special educational needs in inclusive learning.* Proceedings of the I All-Ukrainian Interdisciplinary Scientific-Practical Conference "Inclusive Education: Idea, Strategy, Result", pp. 206–208.
12. Yarmola, A. O. (2020). *Features of psychological-pedagogical support of children with SEN in general secondary education institutions*. Actual Problems of Pedagogy and Psychology, 1(16), pp.55–60.

13. Yarmola, N., Koval-Bardash, L., Kompanets, N., Kvitka, N., & Lapin, A. (2020). *Children with special educational needs in the general education environment: A teaching-methodical manual*. Kyiv: ISPPS named after Mykola Yarmachenko, NAPS of Ukraineб 208p. УДК:376-056.36(072) Available at: https://lib.iitta.gov.ua/id/eprint/729481/1/%D0%9F%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%96%D0%B1%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%BA_%D0%B4%D1%96%D1%82%D0%B8%20%D0%B7%20%D0%BE%D1%81%D0%BE%D0%B1%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%B2%D0%B8%D0%BC%D0%B8%20%D0%BF%D0%BE%D1%82%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%B1%D0%B0%D0%BC%D0%B8%20%D1%83%20%D0%B7%D0%B0%D0%B3%D0%B0%D0%BB%D1%8C%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%BE%D1%81%D0%B2%D1%96%D1%82%D0%BD%D1%8C%D0%BE%D0%BC%D1%83%20%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D0%BE%D1%80%D1%96.pdf

UDC: 159.923.2-021.483:316.662.5
https://doi.org/10.54481/ecosoen.2025.1.07

TOLERANCE AS A RESOURCE FOR SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL ADAPTATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL IN CONDITIONS OF UNCERTAINTY

TOLERANȚA CA RESURSĂ PENTRU ADAPTAREA SOCIO-PSIHOLOGICĂ A PERSOANEI ÎN CONDIȚII DE INCERTITUDINE

KIKINEZHDI Oksana, doctor of psychological sciences, professor,
Ternopil Volodymyr Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University, Ternopil, Ukraine
ROR: https://ror.org/02j98rq95
Institutional E-mail: tnpu.edu@ gmail.com
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-9240-279X
Scopus Author ID: 57219294191
Personal E-mail: okiki77777@gmail.com

VASYLKEVYCH Yaroslava, candidate of psychological sciences, associate professor, Hryhorii Skovoroda University in Pereiaslav, Pereiaslav, Ukraine
ROR: https://ror.org/01p07y544
Institutional E-mail: uhsp.edu@gmail.com
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-5946-3005
Scopus Author ID: 57219291748
Personal E-mail: v.yaroslava15@gmail.com

RYK Hanna, PhD student of the department of psychology
Hryhorii Skovoroda University in Pereiaslav, Pereiaslav, Ukraine
ROR: https://ror.org/01p07y544
Institutional E-mail: uhsp.edu@gmail.com
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-5552-8019
Personal E-mail: gannaryk@gmail.com

Annotation: *The article examines the issue of tolerance among forcibly displaced Ukrainians in the context of their socio-psychological adaptation abroad. An empirical study allowed made it possible to identify of various aspects of tolerance among Ukrainian refugees (across subscales of ethnic tolerance, social tolerance, and tolerance as a personality trait), as well as the significance of the personality tolerance index as an overall indicator. Based on the participants' self-assessment of their current stress levels, the degree of stress resistance as an indicator of personality adaptability was determined. The study revealed the levels of basic beliefs among forcibly displaced Ukrainians abroad, indicating their orientation toward successful socio-psychological adaptation and further self-realization.*

Adnotare: *Articolul examinează problema toleranței în rândul ucrainenilor strămutați forțat, în contextul adaptării lor socio-psihologice în străinătate. Studiul empiric a permis identificarea diferitelor dimensiuni ale toleranței la refugiații ucraineni (subscalele toleranței etnice, sociale și toleranței ca trăsătură de personalitate), precum și relevanța indicelui general al toleranței ca indicator integrat. Pe baza autoevaluării nivelului actual de stres, a fost determinat gradul de reziliență la stres ca indicator al adaptabilității personale. Cercetarea a evidențiat nivelurile credințelor de bază ale ucrainenilor strămutați în străinătate, reflectând orientarea lor spre o adaptare socio-psihologică reușită și o ulterioară autorealizare.*

Keywords: *socio-psychological adaptation, tolerance as a personality trait, ethnic and social tolerance, core beliefs, stress resilience, psychological well-being.*

Cuvinte-cheie: *adaptare socio-psihologică; toleranță ca trăsătură de personalitate; toleranță etnică și socială; credințe de bază; reziliență la stres; bunăstare psihologică.*

Conflict of interest
The author declares that there is no conflict of interest
Article received: 25.04.2025
Accepted for publication: 06.06.2025
Published: 27.06.2025

Conflict de interese
Autorul declară că nu are niciun conflict de interese.
Articol primit: 25.04.2025
Acceptat pentru publicare: 06.06.2025
Publicat: 27.06.2025

© Kikinezhdi Oksana, Vasylkevych Yaroslava, Ryk Hanna, 2025

Introduction

In the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war, the issue of forced displacement, acculturation, and psychological adaptation of Ukrainian refugees to new sociocultural environments in European countries has intensified. Ukrainian citizens faced with forced migration experience uncertainty and social isolation, leading to acculturative stress, "culture shock," helplessness, loss of control over their own lives, personal devaluation, and complicating their integration into host societies. Thus, further research is needed on tolerance as a resource for the socio-psychological adaptation of forcibly displaced persons abroad.

In humanitarian sciences, the phenomenon of tolerance is viewed as a moral imperative of the modern cultural existence of humanity, a foundation for realizing human rights and achievements in a multicultural world, a basic principle of social relationships, a critical social and personal value, an active moral stance, and psychological readiness for uncertainties and crisis situations (Allport, 1954; Frenkel-Brunswick, 1948; Furnham & Ribchester, 1995; Hallman, 1963; Papadopoulos, 2023; Ball, 2007; Kremen, 2011; Popovych, 2011).

In the axiological (value-related) paradigm, the problem of tolerance manifests itself in fundamental life principles and worldview positions of the personality, serving as instruments to counter existential anxiety among forced migrants. Emphasizing tolerance as an imperative in globalized society, V. Kremen (2011) points out the practical implementation of tolerance as a “long-term adaptation and genuine integration while preserving ethnic and cultural identity through mutual respect for each other's cultures and customs”, (p. 9). G. Ball (2007) asserts tolerance as a form of moral behavior linked to stable value orientations of the personality, aimed at overcoming antagonism in interpersonal interactions. Philosopher M. Popovych (2011) shares consonant views regarding tolerance as a moral value and a fundamental aspect of personal worldview that enables individuals to join a globalized “We”, yet preserve their own unique lifeworld, the feeling of national “I” (p. 16).

Declaration of Principles on Tolerance (1996) highlights that tolerance encompasses respect, acceptance, and a proper understanding of the world's cultural diversity, forms of expression, and manifestations of human individuality. Tolerance is a prerequisite for creating an environment where diversity of ideas, mentalities, traditions, lifestyles, and models of self-concept are perceived as enriching opportunities and contribute to strengthening relationships among individuals, helping each person assert themselves as a bearer of cultural and civilized qualities.

Thus, various scholarly approaches to the issue of tolerance emphasize a unified understanding of its essence as acceptance in modern conditions. Generally, tolerance is an interdisciplinary scientific category which includes not only respect for others in the absence of one's own values but also a position that implies expanding personal values through dialogue with individuals of differing cultures, views, orientations, and attitudes.

The adaptation problem of Ukrainian refugees to the new sociocultural environment in European countries pertains to psychosocial support for forced migrants, their mental health preservation, and enhancement of their subjective well-being. T. Tytarenko (2017) argues, “the traumatization experienced by a country's population as a result of direct or indirect involvement in modern hybrid warfare primarily manifests itself in the loss of subjective well-being, indicating a substantial decline in psychological health” (p. 8). Stress factors have the most destructive impact on identity-related, motivational, self-actualization, and communicative domains of individuals. For instance, T. Tytarenko identifies the following psychologically meaningful criteria for increasing communicative competence: a) enhancement of tolerance towards the otherness of people around us, their difference, values, and priorities; b) development of empathy and sensitivity toward others'

experiences; c) formation of adaptability and readiness for compromise for mutual understanding and cooperation (pp. 10-13).

In the context of our research, it is essential to consider tolerance as a psychological phenomenon, a system of fundamental core beliefs and value orientations, an integral personal quality associated with openness and freedom of thinking, psychological resilience, and flexibility in facing crisis situations and traumatic life events.

The American psychologist G. Allport (1954) established the methodological foundations for studying tolerance as a psychological phenomenon, emphasizing characteristics of a tolerant personality such as high mental flexibility, frustration tolerance, an affiliative worldview, liberal political attitudes, self-orientation, empathy, spirituality, self-awareness, responsibility, and a sense of humor (pp. 39–51).

Within epistemological perspectives on studying the experience of forced displacement, the conceptual model termed the "matrix of adversity" by R. Papadopoulos (2023) is of particular interest. Papadopoulos describes the phenomena of human suffering ("polymorphous helplessness", "ontological and ecological unsettlement", "nostalgic disorientation") as normal reactions to atypical circumstances. He highlights adaptive complexity, individuality, integrity, flexibility, and adaptive capacity as essential characteristics for effectively overcoming the "identity of victimhood" and restoring refugees' human dignity (pp. 353–385). Papadopoulos proposes a new eudaimonic perspective ("therapeutic synergistic complexity") for psychotherapeutic assistance to forcibly displaced persons, aimed at developing realistic awareness of personal resources after severe trials (pp. 400–411).

Researchers define tolerance as an integral personality trait, a complex formation of individual psychological characteristics, and identify tolerance components including psychological resilience, a system of positive attitudes, personal qualities (empathy, altruism, peacefulness, religious tolerance, cooperativeness, dialogical aspirations), and personal and group value orientations.

Researchers from the Institute of Social and Political Psychology of the NAES of Ukraine (Korobka, Vasyutynskyi et al., 2019) have described psychological adaptation strategies employed by communities in response to wartime conditions and consequences. They identified socio-psychological resources aimed at increasing individual and collective adaptability, as well as civic activation in addressing adaptation challenges. In an empirical study by A. Kovalenko et al. (2024), Ukrainian forced migrants were found to exhibit low levels of life satisfaction; their self-descriptions tend to focus on professional, educational, and family roles, while integration emerges as their prevailing acculturation strategy (pp. 19–27).

Research by Polish scholars E. Sygit-Kowalkowska, A. Piotrowski, I. Piotrowska, and M. Shultz (2023) assessed stress intensity, psychological resilience, and self-efficacy among Polish and Ukrainian women, revealing higher general stress levels and lower resilience and self-efficacy among Ukrainian women. Thus, such assessments are crucial for predicting adaptation and understanding personal coping resources (pp. 15–17).

T. Yablonska's study (Yablonska & Haivoronskyi, 2023) characterized specific adaptation patterns among displaced Ukrainian mothers to stress and new living conditions, identifying predictors of successful adaptation including personal characteristics, sense of coherence, psycho-emotional state, and coping strategies (pp. 77-78). O. Tashkinova (2023) found that individuals without higher education, older than 50, directly impacted by hostilities, first-time abroad, and lacking family support face the greatest integration difficulties (pp. 78-80).

Empirical research on emotional state dynamics of Ukrainian refugees before and after Russia's full-scale invasion (Vasylkevych & Kikinezhdi, 2025) revealed decreased positive emotional components (mental peace, strength, energy) and increased negative ones (fear, anxiety, sadness), highlighting forced migration as a negative, demobilizing factor.

Consequently, investigating tolerance within social-psychological adaptation processes for forced migrants abroad is of particular relevance and importance. Priority directions for socio-psychological interventions include enhancing self-awareness, empathy, self-efficacy restoration, reflection improvement, reevaluation of values, and constructing new life orientations.

The purpose of the article is to study tolerance of the personality within the context of socio-psychological adaptation among forcibly displaced Ukrainians abroad.

Materials and methods of research

The following methods were applied in the empirical study: the express questionnaire Tolerance Index; the Basic Beliefs Scale by R. Janoff-Bulman; and the method developed by Holmes and Rahe for evaluating an individual's stress resistance and adaptability (Zlyvkov et al., 2016; Rozov, 2024).

The express questionnaire *Tolerance Index* makes it possible to determine the general attitude toward the surrounding world and other people, as well as social attitudes across various domains of interaction in which an individual's tolerance or intolerance is manifested. This questionnaire contains three subscales designed to assess the following aspects of tolerance: ethnic tolerance, social tolerance, and tolerance as a personality trait. The methodology helps identify attitudes toward different social groups, communicative attitudes (respect for others' opinions and viewpoints, readiness for constructive conflict resolution, and willingness to engage in productive cooperation), and ethnic tolerance (attitudes toward people of other races or ethnic groups and assessment of cultural distance).

The *Holmes–Rahe Scale* for assessing stress resistance and social adaptation enables simple and rapid screening of an individual's current stress level over the past year. The scale includes a list of traumatic events ranked by assigned point values that reflect their potential stress impact. The self-report score provided by respondents indicates both their current stress level and their capacity for stress resistance as an indicator of personal adaptability.

The *Basic Beliefs Scale by R. Janoff-Bulman* is designed to identify fundamental beliefs regarding the perceived benevolence and meaningfulness (controllability and fairness) of the world, personal value, the ability to manage events, and luck. According to Janoff-Bulman (1989), a fundamental human feeling – the healthy sense of security – is based on three categories of basic beliefs forming the core of subjective personal reality: the belief that there is more goodness than evil in the world (general attitude toward the world and other people); the belief in the meaningfulness of the world (the conviction that events are not random but governed by principles of justice); and the belief in one's own value (self-esteem, sense of control, and perception of personal luck). These basic beliefs are diagnosed based on eight specific categories: 1) benevolence of the world; 2) benevolence of people; 3) justice of the world; 4) world controllability; 5) randomness as a principle underlying distribution of events; 6) self-worth; 7) the degree of self-control (control over occurring events); and 8) luck or personal fortune.

Results and considerations

Empirical research on personality tolerance in the context of socio-psychological adaptation abroad was conducted in several European countries (Ireland, Germany, Poland, Romania, Lithuania) among forcibly displaced Ukrainians. The study involved 40 forced migrants of different ages, including 34 females and 6 males, aged 21 to 48.

The Tolerance Index express questionnaire, as a comprehensive methodological tool, made it possible to identify different aspects of tolerance (tolerance as a personality trait, ethnic tolerance, social tolerance), as well as the overall index of personality tolerance. The average values for the separate tolerance aspects and the overall index for the sample of forcibly displaced Ukrainians are presented in Table 1.

Table 2. Percentage distribution of tolerance levels for main aspects and the overall index (according to the "Tolerance Index" questionnaire)

Types of Tolerance	Levels of Tolerance		
	Low level	Medium level	High level
Ethnic tolerance	25	65	10
Social tolerance	25	70	5
Tolerance as a personality trait	15	15	70
Tolerance index	25	55	20

The ethnic tolerance subscale reflects attitudes toward individuals from different ethnic groups, intercultural interaction, and perceived cultural distance. The average score (25.4) corresponds to a medium level (20–31 points).

The social tolerance subscale assesses tolerant and intolerant attitudes toward various social groups (minorities, individuals with criminal background, the poor, etc.) and attitudes toward social processes. The average value (27.05) also indicates a medium level (23–36 points).

The tolerance as a personality trait subscale diagnoses the individual's personal characteristics, attitudes, and beliefs that shape their interaction with the surrounding world. With an average score of 32.15, this indicator corresponds to a high level (32 points and above), though situated near its lower boundary.

The overall tolerance index (84.6) corresponds to a medium level, indicating the coexistence of both tolerant and intolerant personal traits among participants.

The results of the analysis of tolerance levels among the respondents are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Percentage distribution of tolerance levels for main aspects and overall index (according to the "Tolerance Index" questionnaire)

Types of Tolerance	Levels of Tolerance		
	Low level	Medium level	High level
Ethnic tolerance	25	65	10
Social tolerance	25	70	5
Tolerance as a personality trait	15	15	70
Tolerance index	25	55	20

As shown in Table 2, medium-level scores dominate the "ethnic tolerance" and "social tolerance" subscales (65% and 70%, respectively). Twenty-five percent of respondents displayed low levels on these subscales, indicating pronounced intolerance in ethnic (attitudes toward individuals of other races or ethnic groups) and social (attitudes toward different social categories) domains. Only 10% of respondents scored high on ethnic tolerance, and just 5% demonstrated high social tolerance – reflecting openness and positive attitudes toward intercultural interaction.

Regarding the tolerance as a personality trait subscale, high-level tolerance clearly prevails (70%). This indicates a well-expressed tolerant orientation, especially in communicative aspects such as respect for others' opinions, readiness for constructive conflict resolution, and willingness for productive cooperation. Only 15% of participants exhibited low scores, reflecting marked communicative intolerance.

The analysis of the tolerance index as a generalized indicator of personal tolerance revealed a predominance of medium levels (55%), characterized by the presence of both tolerant and intolerant traits depending on situational social contexts. A high tolerance index was found in 20% of respondents who demonstrated consistently tolerant attitudes across different spheres of life. A low

tolerance index was observed in 25% of the sample, indicating significant intolerance and rigid negative attitudes toward the environment and other people.

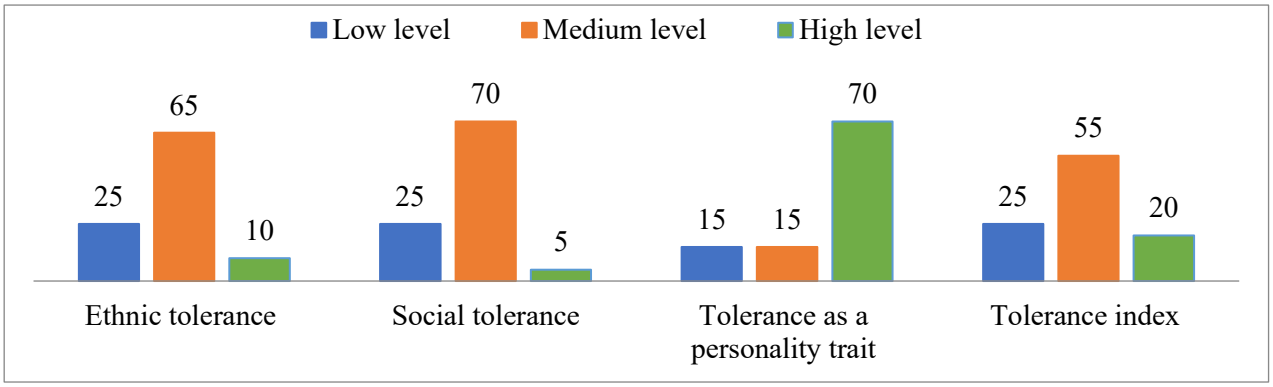

Figure 1. Indicators of levels of the main types and general tolerance index according to the express questionnaire "Tolerance Index" (in %).

This subgroup of forcibly displaced Ukrainians requires targeted psychological intervention to enhance personal tolerance and strengthen socio-psychological adaptation abroad. Increasing tolerance facilitates a more positive perception of new social conditions, thus improving readiness and capacity for social integration.

To analyze the impact of significant life changes on mental health, the Holmes and Rahe Social Readjustment Rating Scale method was used, revealing the stressful experiences that forcibly displaced Ukrainians abroad had encountered during the past year. Respondents' self-assessments of their current stress level made it possible to determine their degree of stress resistance as an indicator of personal adaptability. The distribution of stress-resistance levels among forcibly displaced Ukrainians abroad is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Distribution of levels of stress-resistance and personal adaptability according to the Holmes-Rahe scale (in %)

Level of Stress Resistance		
High Stress Resistance	Moderate Stress Resistance	Low Stress Resistance
199 points or less	200-299(threshold)	300 points or more
25	20	55

High stress resistance was observed in 25% of respondents, characterized by low levels of stress load and high resilience, providing a basis for quite effective personal functioning. Moderate (threshold) level was displayed by 20% of respondents, characterized by medium stress levels; stress resistance in these individuals decreases if stressful situations continue, as they spend considerable energy and resources overcoming negative psychological states generated under stress. Low stress resistance was evident in 55% of respondents, characterized by high stress loads and low resilience. Such individuals are advised to avoid activities that might initiate or intensify stress.

A comparative analysis of stress-resistance level distribution among forcibly displaced individuals according to gender showed that the subgroup of women predominantly had low stress resistance (58.8%), while the subgroup of men predominantly displayed high levels (66.7%). Female respondents reported higher levels of stress and lower resilience. Women's higher reported stress level indicates their relatively poorer adaptability.

For analyzing basic beliefs within respondents, the Basic Beliefs Scale by R. Janoff-Bulman was used, determining individuals' beliefs about the benevolence and meaningfulness of the world and their self-worth, all underlying a fundamental human need – healthy feelings of safety and security. According to the cognitive concept of fundamental beliefs formulated by R. Janoff-Bulman

(1989), beliefs can change due to traumatic events. Events such as war in Ukraine and the extreme conditions of forced displacement to other countries constitute traumatic experiences. Such experiences can disrupt customary perceptions of the world, life assumptions, and behavioral strategies, causing extended and serious psychological distress and issues. Negative extreme circumstances can result in feelings of helplessness and loss of control over one's life. Consequently, traumatic experiences significantly influence individuals' basic beliefs regarding both the outer world and self-perception.

According to R. Janoff-Bulman's Scale, basic beliefs are defined according to eight primary belief categories: 1) benevolence of the world, 2) kindness of people, 3) fairness (justice) of the world, 4) controllability of the world, 5) randomness (chance) as a principle of event distribution, 6) perceived self-worth ('value of own "Self"'), 7) personal level of self-control (control over occurring events), and 8) luckiness or sense of luck.

The level indicators of basic beliefs among forced migrants from Ukraine abroad are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Levels of fundamental beliefs among forcibly displaced Ukrainians using R. Janoff-Bulman's Scale (%)

Basic Beliefs	Levels of Basic Beliefs				
	Low	Reduced	Medium	Increased	High
Benevolence of world	15	30	40	10	5
Kindness of people	5	25	40	25	5
Justice of world	5	15	35	35	10
Controllability of world	5	40	40	10	5
Randomness as principle	10	25	45	5	15
Value of one's own "Self"	15	35	30	5	15
Degree of self-control	15	45	30	5	5
Sense of luck	10	30	30	20	10

The primary belief categories "benevolence of the world" and "kindness of people" allow the evaluation of the first general attitude dimension – overall attitude toward world benevolence. As Table 4 suggests, Ukrainian refugees have more confidence in people than in the surrounding world. High and increased scores on "kindness of people" belief constitute 30% compared to just 15% for "benevolence of the world." Respectively, low and reduced scores for "kindness of people" also amount to 30%, whereas for "benevolence of the world," they are as high as 45%. Evidently, the traumatic experience of Ukrainian refugees diminished their belief that the world is generally benevolent, yet their faith in individuals' kindness remains stronger.

The second aggregated dimension – beliefs about the world's meaningfulness – includes three primary belief categories: "justice of the world", "controllability of the world", and "randomness as principle of event distribution". Ukrainian refugees maintain a belief that events follow principles of justice (high and increased scores – 45%; low and reduced – 20%) and that events do not occur randomly (high and increased level on "randomness of events" belief – 20%; low and reduced – 35%). However, their confidence in events' controllability by humans was notably reduced (high and increased level – 15%; low and reduced – 45%).

The third general dimension consists of beliefs regarding personal value, capability of event-managing, and luck. Forcibly displaced Ukrainians had the lowest scores on the belief category "degree of self-control": high and increased levels constitute only 10%, while the low and reduced levels account for 60%. Therefore, most refugees showed low self-control and an inadequate sense of control over occurring events. Indicators for the "value of one's self" belief were similarly low (high and increased level – 20%; low and reduced level – 50%). Nevertheless, optimism regarding

personal fortune slightly persisted (high and increased level on "sense of luck" at 30%, low and reduced level – 40%).

According to the concept proposed by R. Janoff-Bulman (1989), a more optimistic and tolerant attitude of individuals towards the surrounding world, others, and themselves contributes to enhanced psychological stability, improved overall functionality in life, and greater subjective well-being.

Individuals with lower indicators of beliefs about world controllability and self-control require psychological support as well as assistance from the host community in integrating into a full-fledged life within their new sociocultural environment.

Conclusions

Tolerance was examined as an integral personality characteristic that determines an individual's capacity for successful adaptation under conditions of uncertainty through active interaction with the external environment, restoration of neuropsychological balance, and the development of positive relationships with oneself and the surrounding world.

The empirical research made it possible to identify various aspects of tolerance, as well as the tolerance index as a generalized indicator of personality tolerance. The level-based analysis among forced migrants abroad showed that medium levels predominated on the “ethnic tolerance” and “social tolerance” subscales, whereas high levels dominated the “tolerance as a personality trait” subscale. The analysis of the generalized tolerance index indicated a predominance of medium levels, characterized by the presence of both tolerant and intolerant characteristics depending on specific social situations.

The degree of stress resilience, viewed as an indicator of personal adaptability, was also determined: among forced migrants abroad, low stress resilience prevailed, characterized by a high stress load and low tolerance to stress.

The basic beliefs of forcibly displaced Ukrainians abroad were found predominantly at medium and high levels, indicating a readiness for successful socio-psychological adaptation and further self-realization.

Effective forms of psychosocial support for Ukrainian refugees adapting to life in European countries include interventions that enhance subjective well-being in cross-cultural communication, promote harmonious relationships with members of the host community, encourage participation in cultural training programs, strengthen self-esteem, foster openness toward the host culture, facilitate assimilation of local practices and traditions, support psychological (mental) health, and help restore a coherent and holistic sense of identity.

Bibliography

1. Allport, G. W. (1954). *The nature of prejudice*. Cambridge, MA: Perseus Books.
2. Ball, H. O. (2007). *Relevant methodological issues in the study of morality and moral behavior*. Social Psychology, Special Issue, pp.14–22. [in Ukrainian]
3. Furnham, A., & Ribchester, T. (1995). *Tolerance of ambiguity: a review of the concept, its measurement, and applications.* Current Psychology: developmental, learning, personality, social, 14, pp. 179–199.
4. Hallman, R. J. (1963). *The necessary and sufficient conditions of creativity*. Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 3(1), pp. 14–27.
5. Janoff-Bulman, R. (1989). *Assumptive worlds and the stress of traumatic events: Application of the schema construct.* Social Cognition, 7(2), pp.113–136.
6. Korobka, L. M. (Ed.). (2019). *Community under conditions of military conflict: Psychological strategies of adaptation* (Collective monograph). Kropyvnytskyi: Imex-LTD. Institute of Social and Political Psychology of National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine. [in Ukrainian]
7. Kovalenko, A. B., Gryshchuk, E. Yu., & Sharapa, S. V. (2024). *Peculiarities of social identity and socio-psychological adaptation of Ukrainian migrants.* Problems of identity development in the educational space: Proceedings of the 3rd Round Table, October 15, 2024, pp.19–27. Kyiv: Millennium, VC Prosvita.

[in Ukrainian]
8. Kremen, V. G. (2011). *Tolerance as imperative: National identity in the age of globalization.* Scientific Bulletin of the Mykolaiv State University named after V. Sukhomlynskyi. Series: Pedagogical Sciences, 1(32), pp. 6–9. [in Ukrainian]
9. Papadopoulos, R. (2023). *Involuntary Dislocation – Home in a Foreign Land. Trauma of forced displacement: Understanding and healing* (I. Bodak & N. Yatsiuk, Trans.). Kyiv: Laboratoriia. (Original work published in English). [in Ukrainian]
10. Popovych, M. V. (2011). *The role of philosophy in the spiritual development of humankind*. In Tolerance as a socio-humanitarian problem of modernity: Proceedings of the 3rd International Scientific and Theoretical Conference (Zhytomyr, May 19–20, 2011) (p. 16). Zhytomyr: ZhDU named after I. Franko Publishing House. [in Ukrainian]
11. Rozov, V. I. (2024). *Psychology of extreme situations: Stress adaptability and psychological support* (Research and practical guide). Kyiv: KNT. [in Ukrainian]
12. Sigit-Kowalkowska, E., Piotrowski, A., Petrovska, I., & Szulc, M. (2023). *Stress, resilience, and self-efficacy during the Russian aggression against Ukraine among groups of women from Ukraine and Poland.* In Psychology Facing the Russo-Ukrainian War: Proceedings of the Ukrainian-Polish Scientific Conference abstracts. Lviv, May 19–20, 2023, pp.15–16). [in Ukrainian]
13. Tashkinova, O. (2023). *Experience of evacuation and life in emigration of Ukrainian female war migrants temporarily residing in Poland*. In Psychology Facing the Russo-Ukrainian War: Proceedings of the Ukrainian-Polish Scientific Conference abstracts. Lviv, May 19–20, 2023, pp. 78–80. [in Ukrainian]
14. Tytarenko, T. M. (Ed.). (2017). *Ways of enhancing a person's social adaptation capacity after experiencing traumatic events:* Methodological recommendations. Kropyvnytskyi: Imex-LTD. Institute of Social and Political Psychology of National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine. [in Ukrainian]
15. Vasylkevych, Ya. Z., Kikinezhdi, O. M. et al. (2021). *Creativity and uncertainty tolerance as a resource for the psychological well-being of an individual.* Revista de la Universidad del Zulia, 12(34), pp. 585-603. Available at: DOI: https://doi.org/10.46925//rdluz.34 [Accessed 16 Mar. 2025].
16. Vasylkevych, Ya., & Kikinezhdi, O. (2025). *Dynamics of emotional states as an indicator of adaptation of Ukrainian refugees in European countries.* Bulletin of the National Defence University of Ukraine, 1(83), pp. 41–49. Available at: https://doi.org/10.33099/2617-6858-2025-83-1-41-49 [in Ukrainian] [Accessed 15 Mar. 2025].
17. Yablonska, T., & Haivoronskyi, H. (2023). *Peculiarities of adaptation of displaced Ukrainian mothers under war conditions*. In Psychology Facing the Russo-Ukrainian War: Proceedings of the Ukrainian-Polish Scientific Conference abstracts. Lviv, May 19–20, 2023, pp. 77–78. [in Ukrainian]
18. Zlyvkov, V. L., Lukomska, S. O., & Fedan, O. V. (2016). *Psychodiagnostics of personality in crisis life situations.* Kyiv: Pedahohichna Dumka. [in Ukrainian]

UDC 316.77:35.078.3
https://doi.org/10.54481/ecosoen.2025.1.08

ADVANCING COMMUNICATION BETWEEN LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND CITIZENS: A MEDIATING ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES

CONSOLIDAREA COMUNICĂRII DINTRE AUTORITĂȚILE LOCALE ȘI CETĂȚENI: ROLUL MEDIATOR AL UNIVERSITĂȚILOR

CIULADIENE Grazina, PhD in Educology, Professor
Faculty of Human and Social Studies, Mykolas Romeris University, Lithuania
ROR: https://ror.org/0052k0e03
Institutional E-mail: roffice@mruni.eu
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-8054-0781
Personal E-mail: grazina.ciuladiene@mruni.eu

PIVORIENE Jolanta, PhD in Sociology, Professor
Faculty of Human and Social Studies, Mykolas Romeris University, Lithuania
ROR: https://ror.org/0052k0e03
Institutional E-mail: roffice@mruni.eu
ORCID ID: 0000-0001-6328-7940
Personal E-mail: jolantapiv@mruni.eu

ZEMAITAITIENE Gintare, PhD in Management, Associate Professor
Faculty of Human and Social Studies, Mykolas Romeris University, Lithuania
ROR: https://ror.org/0052k0e03
Institutional E-mail: roffice@mruni.eu
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-3540-4019
Personal E-mail: giparaz@mruni.eu

This article was developed within the framework of the Erasmus+ project "Higher Education Institutions as Innovative Triggers of Sustainable Development in European Cities in the Post-Covid-19 Era" (Project No. KA220-HED-96EB51E1).

Annotation: *Students are understood as intellectual, physical, emotional, and spiritual human beings who interact reciprocally with the political, economic, social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions of their communities (Maistry & Thakrar, 2012, p. 65). In this context, a new study course was developed and piloted to strengthen students' preparedness for community engagement practice. The article presents this study course, outlining its aims, content, structure, and instructional design, and discusses its accessibility for higher education institutions seeking to foster citizen participation processes.*

The implementation of the course at Mykolas Romeris University (Vilnius, Lithuania) is used as an illustrative case to demonstrate its applicability and potential impact. The course "Participation Management: Tools for Citizen Engagement and Community Empowerment" builds on students' knowledge to promote compassionate, socially engaged, critical, and responsible citizenship. By engaging students with real community challenges and integrating them into purposeful activities, universities assume a mediating role in addressing societal issues and preparing future professionals capable of contributing to community resilience.

Anotare: *Studenții prezintă ființe umane intelectuale, fizice, emoționale și spirituale, care interacționează reciproc cu dimensiunile politice, economice, sociale, culturale și spirituale ale comunităților din care fac parte (Maistry & Thakrar, 2012, p. 65). În acest context, a fost elaborat și pilotat un nou curs universitar, conceput pentru a consolida pregătirea studenților în vederea implicării practice în comunitate. Articolul prezintă acest curs, descriindu-i obiectivele, conținutul, structura și designul didactic, precum și modul în care poate fi preluat de instituțiile de învățământ superior interesate de promovarea proceselor de participare civică.*

Implementarea cursului la Universitatea Mykolas Romeris (Vilnius, Lituania) este utilizată ca studiu ilustrativ pentru a demonstra aplicabilitatea și impactul său potențial. Cursul „Managementul Participării:

Instrumente pentru Implicarea Cetățenilor și Împuternicirea Comunității" valorifică cunoștințele studenților pentru a dezvolta un tip de cetățenie empatică, social angajată, critică și responsabilă. Prin conectarea studenților la provocări reale ale comunității și integrarea lor în activități cu finalitate socială, universitățile își asumă un rol de mediator în abordarea problemelor societale și în formarea profesioniștilor capabili să contribuie la reziliența comunităților.

Keywords: *community engagement; citizen participation; municipality; local communication; community problem-solving; higher education; study course; Lithuania*
Cuvinte-cheie: *implicare comunitară; participare civică; municipalitate; comunicare locală; rezolvarea problemelor comunitare; învățământ superior; curs universitar; Lituania*

Conflict of interest
The author declares that there is no conflict of interest
Article received: 20.04.2025
Accepted for publication: 06.06.2025
Published: 27.06.2025

Conflict de interese
Autorul declară că nu are niciun conflict de interese.
Articol primit: 20.04.2025
Acceptat pentru publicare: 06.06.2025
Publicat: 27.06.2025

© Ciuladiene Grazina, Pivoriene Jolanta, Zemaitaitiene Gintare, 2025

Introduction

The term *community engagement* refers to activities carried out collaboratively with and through groups of people to address issues affecting their social well-being (Woronkowicz, 2018). The overall purpose of citizen participation is to enhance the quality and legitimacy of policy decisions and to shift from a service-focused approach to a citizen-oriented one (Ianniello et al., 2019). As it leads to services that respond more effectively to citizens' needs, citizen participation is regarded as a factor that maximizes the efficiency of public policy (Bensus, 2021; Lappas et al., 2022). Sustained involvement of diverse participants in community-led decision-making corresponds to participatory processes adhering to democratic standards (Yet et al., 2022).

However, creating equitable citizen participation processes – that is, establishing dialogue among heterogeneous actors – is not always easy. Managing participatory processes correlates with increased workload for officials and entails considerable costs (Buckwalter, 2014). In addition, officials often place little trust in the skills, intelligence, and experience of ordinary people. Arnstein (1969) notes that "in most cases the have-nots really do perceive the powerful as a monolithic 'system,' and powerholders actually do view the have-nots as a sea of 'those people'" (p. 217). Citizen involvement often centres on the needs and goals of the party initiating the involvement rather than those of the citizens themselves. Thus, encouraging participation in decision-making through the development of long-term partnerships with local community groups is challenging. Partnerships remain elusive unless partners are able to articulate, debate, and resolve disagreements (Ianniello et al., 2019).

Students must be educated and prepared for engaging with communities. Through community engagement – which is not the exclusive domain of universities but also of local communities – local people can articulate what local community issues are, where and when they arise, and how these issues could be addressed, drawing on their lived experiences. These facets of knowledge are relevant to a university's mission of fostering sustainable development by addressing issues that matter to the community (Mbah, 2019). Students and faculty benefit from applying their knowledge and skills to real-world problems, which has been shown to positively affect academic performance, civic engagement, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and leadership capacity (Hahn et al., 2020). Moreover, higher education institutions that promote students' social and civic responsibility through community engagement contribute to the socio-economic development of the country (Maistry & Thakrar, 2012, p. 65).

The present study aims to disseminate information about a new study course, *Participation Management: Tools for Citizen Engagement and Community Empowerment*, created within the framework of the Erasmus+ project KA220-HED-96EB51E1.

Contextual information: about the project

The Erasmus+ project titled "HEIs as Innovative Triggers of Sustainable Development in European Cities in the Post-Covid-19 Era" (HEIsCITI) focuses on teaching students effective ways to facilitate and coordinate communication between citizens and local authorities for inclusive and sustainable urban development in the post-Covid-19 period. HEIsCITI aims to equip students with a set of skills and knowledge necessary to understand the importance of responsible citizenship and inclusive, sustainable urban development.

The main objective of the project is to provide a universal methodology, tools, and policy guidelines for efficient communication between citizens and local/regional authorities. The development process of the universal toolkit included the following phases:

- Conceptualizing the curriculum design (April 2023 – June 2023),
- Developing the curriculum design (September 2023 – November 2023),
- Developing tools (learning/teaching materials) (November 2023 – March 2024),
- Curriculum piloting and evaluation (April 2024 – June 2024),
- Editing the curriculum and tools (refinement phase) (September 2024 – May 2025),
- Developing guidance for local/regional authorities (January 2025 – May 2025).

The methodology was piloted in three European regions: Cieszyn (a city on the border between Poland and the Czech Republic), Joniškis District (a Lithuanian district on the Lithuanian–Latvian border with a Latvian minority), and the Stuttgart region (one of the best European examples of integration activities with migrants and refugees). The methodology and tools are universal and focused on soft skills, enabling all universities – regardless of their specialisation – to integrate them into the curriculum.

Description of the study course "Participation Management: tools for citizen engagement and community empowerment"

In the framework of the Erasmus+ project, the course *"Participation Management: tools for citizen engagement and community empowerment"* was created and implemented (piloted). The key goal is to sustain students' involvement in community development by building partnerships between various community engagement actors. The course aims to influence urban policy and practice toward a system that emphasizes the sharing of decision-making power through improved information, communication, and dialogue. The objectives of the course are as follows:

• To define the concept of community engagement
• To provide a variety of tools enabling responsible participation in local contexts
• To guide students in the process of designing a project/plan addressing particular community needs

Learning outcomes imply that students gain knowledge and also develop a range of skills: research, special, social, and personal (Table 1).

Table 1. Course content in terms of knowledge and skills

	SKILLS			
Knowledge	Research	Special	Social	Personal
Civic engagement: concept, principles, forms, issues	Action research Case study	Communication for citizen engagement	Group cooperation Problem solving	Creativity, personal responsibility

	SKILLS			
Knowledge	Research	Special	Social	Personal
Knows main principles of participation approach and ways how to implement it	Is able to identify and formulate research problems, initiate and independently implement media and communication research, creatively apply scientific methods, collect empirical information, properly manage time, human and financial resources.	Is able to analyze the organization's information environment, manage internal and external communication, create relations with audiences based on mutual understanding and cooperation, prepare and implement communication strategies.	Is able to solve problem situations, and assumes civic and social responsibility for the results of his and his team's activities, their impact on public welfare and the environment.	Is able to think analytically, strategically, creatively, initiate and organize projects, takes responsibility for one's actions.

The volume of the course (module) is 2 ECTS credits. The estimated student workload is 27 hours per 1 ECTS credit. However, the actual workload may differ across institutions. Different institutions may have different implementation possibilities: integrating the course into an existing higher-credit module or offering it as a separate micro-credential, either compulsory or elective, taught to Bachelor's or Master's students.

The course contains three main modules:

1. Theoretical input describing the concept of community engagement. Lectures cover topics such as: levels, forms, and methods of citizen engagement; engagement strategies and mechanisms; guidelines for community participation; issues hindering citizen engagement; and tools enabling both social and vertical communication between citizens and authorities.
2. Contextual information – gaining local knowledge on topics such as municipality characteristics, policy context, and tensions between citizens and institutions.
3. Project-based engagement emerging in practice – preparing a project/plan based on action research addressing particular community needs (setting strategic priorities for service delivery, resolving conflicting interests, measuring progress).

The working hours of a student (student workload) in the course are classified into contact hours and self-study hours (independent work). Contact work refers to teaching staff-guided activities (lectures, seminars, training exercises, knowledge checks, consultations, etc.). Independent work hours are dedicated to the individual study of additional material and the completion of assigned tasks. By preparing and presenting the results of their individual work, students contribute to the development of the subject content by sharing specialized insights.

Thus, the course is divided into two main parts.

The first part – theoretical – introduces students to the implementation of the course and provides knowledge and skills related to participation for societal engagement and the participatory approach. In addition, the municipality's characteristics and policy context are introduced.

The second part – practical – aims at implementing students' own projects. After completing the theoretical sessions, students begin the process of determining which aspect of policy, practice, or the built environment they wish to investigate. Student grouping for the onsite task (project) is based on their interests (Table 2).

Table 2. Distribution of working hours

TOPICS	Contact work hours			
	Lectures	Seminars	Consultation	Assessment
Students guidelines				
Introduction to the course (aim, objectives, content, assessment strategy, resources)	2	2		
Theoretical part				
Municipality's policy context	2			
The concept of citizen engagement (levels, forms, and methods; issues, guidelines)	4	4		
Participatory tools	4	4		
Empirical part				
Challenge introduction – municipality case				
Engagement emerges in practice: participatory action research (project), including using participatory tools – independent student work			6+	
Presentation of participatory action research (project)				2

During participatory action research (the project), students have the opportunity to apply the acquired knowledge in practice. The independent work hours are dedicated to applying selected tools to create a participatory approach and to implement the project. Each project is based on a prepared scenario – a case study – to be solved. Consultation hours are also planned for the lecturer to discuss project issues, clarify rules, and outline the goals to be achieved. The final stage is a presentation of the results, accompanied by a detailed written report.

Lecturers act as mentors who support and promote students' individual development. They encourage critical thinking, creativity, independence, and initiative, helping students realize their full potential. This requires significant restraint and creative guidance from the educator to allow students to operate with agency and autonomy. In addition, the lecturer is responsible for making arrangements with municipal representatives or decision-makers who may encourage and endorse student involvement, provide explicit permission to work on planning or design projects, and offer guidance if needed.

Goals must be consistently agreed upon for partnerships to bring benefits to all parties. Ultimately, city leaders make the final decisions – there is no guarantee that students' ideas will be implemented. This requires leaders to recognize that intentional inclusion is essential for genuine partnership to flourish.

Students play the role of community participation promoters. They facilitate communication from residents to officials, monitor the quality of public spaces or specific issues, gather complaints and requests from residents, and inform community leaders. They also conduct surveys to learn more about residents' opinions on possible changes before (and after) interventions are implemented. As a result, practicing planners are challenged to find ways to authentically include youth voices in productive and non-tokenistic decision-making frameworks (Botchwey et al., 2019).

The course can be described as a transdisciplinary teaching and learning experience based on collaborative pedagogy that builds on students' knowledge as a means of developing compassionate, socially engaged, critical, and responsible citizens. The course provides students with a transdisciplinary experience, allowing them to engage with societal issues from different perspectives. Through knowledge co-creation, sharing, and assimilation, the framework of

collaborative engagement can be beneficial in advancing, fostering, and realizing the interests of local partners and the community (Mbah, 2019).

The course is devoted to civic participation, which concerns the relationship between authorities and citizens/students. This type of participation is sometimes referred to as public participation – participation related to public affairs or vertical participation, i.e., interaction between citizens and authorities. In the literature on democracy and participation, another form is also discussed: participation that involves cooperation among various individuals or groups in achieving a common goal, for example, neighbors working together to improve a shared courtyard or social organizations collaborating on initiatives for people with disabilities. This type is often called social participation, because it concerns the community, or horizontal participation, because it involves relationships among residents or groups.

The implementation of a course "Participation Management: tools for citizen engagement and community empowerment" at Mykolas Romeris university

The project-based course "Participation Management: Tools for Citizen Engagement and Community Empowerment" (2 ECTS) was implemented while teaching the course "Research Methodology" (6 ECTS) at the Institute of Communication during the spring semester (February–June 2024). Eleven students participated. They were first-year students of the Master's programme "Communication and Creative Technologies". Students' workload is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Student workload

Number of ECTS credits allocated	Institution	Student workload	Contact work hours and planned learning activities	Independent work hours
2	MRU	54	12 lectures, 16 seminars, consultations	24

After the introduction part (project information, course description), students received lectures on the following topics:

1) community participation in decision making;
2) involvement of citizens in municipal development;
3) embracing Resilience: Innovating Participatory Methods in the Post-COVID Era (case of Croatia);
4) design thinking: stages and activities; creative techniques and tools;
5) research methods for collecting information about the case and presenting results.

After this theoretical input, a meeting with a representative of Joniškis District Municipality (the Vice-Mayor) was organized. The Vice-Mayor introduced the municipality and invited students to investigate its communication practices. The chosen topic was aligned with both the students' study programme and the practical needs of the municipality.

Active citizenship is facilitated by a communication infrastructure, which includes both human communicative agents (everyday conversations, local meetings) and mass media. By using communicative formats at multiple levels, citizens engage in discussions and meetings that lead to small changes or large transformations. Communication infrastructure supports the formation of a participatory culture. Communication Infrastructure Theory (CIT) states that members of a community build connections to a storytelling network that enables collective action: "storytelling networks in a communication action context are initiators of collective action. As members of a society communicate with each other, they develop a sense of togetherness within the society" (Kang, 2016, p. 451).

Thus, students were guided to investigate the communication infrastructure of Joniškis District Municipality. They worked in pairs to analyse selected topics and answer the following questions:

1) What are the characteristics of current citizen involvement in Joniškis District?
2) What variables might encourage ordinary people to participate effectively in policies that affect their lives?
3) What are the communication goals, priorities, and main messages of the municipality?
4) What are the characteristics of daily communication?
5) How effectively does the municipality use social networks to disseminate information in times of crisis?
6) What factors could encourage the community to engage with municipal communication on social networks?

Students conducted surveys and interviews with both citizens and municipal communication specialists and performed a content analysis of the municipality's website and social media platforms. They developed results and suggestions, which they presented during a meeting at Joniškis District Municipality.

At the end, students presented their findings and recommendations to city representatives, project staff, and the university community. Students' participatory action research strengthens youth participation by providing a strong argument for balancing youth-led and adult-led planning efforts. By fostering partnership and mutual respect, young people feel empowered to approach local leaders with proposals for change.

Through community empowerment tools, students advocate for improvements. Their efforts include: identifying goals, developing a work plan, collecting data, defining problems, creating solutions and proposals for improvement, presenting their vision to local decision makers and the public, and reflecting on outcomes.

Participation in the course increased students' awareness of the importance of civic engagement and helped them develop knowledge and skills in facilitating communication between citizens and local authorities.

Students evaluated the course positively. They emphasized its impact on their attitudes toward constructive dialogue and cooperation. Some participants noted:

"This project provided insights into the unique aspects and challenges of public sector communication. It also allowed me to apply the structured stages of design thinking, which led to even more creative ideas. As a marketing professional, I found it fascinating how the older generation appreciates communication innovations in social media and engages deeply". (Ruta)

"Participating in this project provided valuable experience in teamwork. We learned to align different perspectives, find compromises, and work toward a common goal. Communication is more than just exchanging words; it's about creating connections, inspiring action, and empowering communities to solve common challenges". (Justyna)

The pilot has elements of partnership embedded in its structure. It addressed real issues and proposed improvements directly to decision makers. MRU students were offered the opportunity to share their visions for improving municipal communication strategies. They were free to propose any intervention, as long as it was grounded in their analysis. They shared their understanding of community needs and presented solutions they believed would benefit the municipality.

The "Participation Management" curriculum teaches young people about civic and municipal issues while empowering them to engage with real-world problems affecting their communities.

Conclusions

Sustainable urban development relies on effective communication between local authorities and citizens, as well as on shared values between these actors. Citizens need to know that their point of view matters to local authorities, and city authorities should not only consult their decisions with citizens, but also ask them what needs to be changed, improved, and, above all, how it should be

done. Citizens experience the city on a daily basis, so they know best what and how to improve to make the city more open, inclusive, and environmentally friendly.

Students must be educated and prepared to engage with communities. Universities can serve as a link between the needs of citizens and the objectives of local authorities – a trigger for innovation that brings together the expectations of both sides by identifying common values. The HEIsCITI project equips students from different specialties with skills to facilitate citizen–local authority communication based on inclusive civic engagement, with a focus on sustainable development and environmentally friendly solutions. Within this framework, the curriculum "Participation Management: Tools for Citizen Engagement and Community Empowerment" offers unique opportunities for students to learn about their communities and engage with decision makers. It empowers young people to assume leadership roles, offering suggestions and pathways for influencing policy and environmental conditions.

A central feature of teaching this study subject is the close link between theoretical knowledge and practical application. The course is divided into two main parts. The first part – the theoretical component – introduces students to the implementation of the course and provides knowledge and skills related to societal engagement and participatory approaches. Additionally, students are introduced to the municipality's characteristics and policy context. The second part – the practical component – aims at implementing independent projects. After completing the theoretical lessons, students determine which aspect they want to investigate. Student grouping for the onsite task (project) is based on their interests.

The course can be described as a transdisciplinary teaching and learning experience based on collaborative pedagogy that builds on students' knowledge as a means of developing compassionate, socially engaged, critical, and responsible citizens. It provides a transdisciplinary experience that allows students to engage with societal issues from multiple perspectives. Through participation in this course, students become more aware of the need for civic engagement and develop the knowledge and skills required to facilitate communication between citizens and local authorities.

Bibliography

1. Arnstein, Sh. R. (1969). *A Ladder of Citizen Participation.* Journal of the American Institute of Planners, 35 (4), pp.216-224. DOI: 10.1080/01944366908977225 [Accessed 09 Mar. 2025].
2. Bensus, V. (2021). *Improving local governance with citizen engagement?* City, 25 (1-2), pp.88-107. DOI: 10.1080/13604813.2021.1885913 [Accessed 24 Mar. 2025].
3. Botchwey, N. D., Johnson, N., O'Connell, L. K. & Kim, A. J. (2019). *Including Youth in the Ladder of Citizen Participation.* Journal of the American Planning Association, 85 (3), pp.255-270. DOI: 10.1080/01944363.2019.1616319 [Accessed 18 Mar. 2025].
4. Buckwalter, N. D. (2014). *The Potential for Public Empowerment through Government-Organized Participation.* Public Administration Review, 74, pp.573-584. https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.12217 [Accessed 29 Mar. 2025].
5. Hahn, M.B., Kemp, C., Ward-Waller, Ch., Donovan, Sh., Schmidt, J. I., & Bauer, S. (2020) *Collaborative climate mitigation and adaptation planning with university, community, and municipal partners: a case study in Anchorage, Alaska*. Local Environment, 25 (9), pp.648-665. DOI: 10.1080/13549839.2020.1811655 [Accessed 11 Mar. 2025].
6. Ianniello, M., Iacuzzi, S., Fedele, P., & Brusati, L (2019). *Obstacles and solutions on the ladder of citizen participation: a systematic review.* Public Management Review, 21 (1), pp.21-46. DOI: 10.1080/14719037.2018.1438499 [Accessed 14 Mar. 2025].
7. Kang, S. (2016). *Communication Infrastructure and Civic Engagement in the ICT Era: A Synthetic Approach.* Annals of the International Communication Association, 40 (1), pp.449-466. DOI: 10.1080/23808985.2015.11735268 [Accessed 18 Mar. 2025].
8. Lappas, G., Triantafillidou, A. & Kani, A. (2022). *Harnessing the power of dialogue: examining the impact of facebook content on citizens' engagement*. Local Government Studies, 48 (1), pp.87-106. DOI: 10.1080/03003930.2020.1870958 [Accessed 21 Mar. 2025].

9. Maistry, M., & Thakrar, J. (2012). *Educating students for effective community engagement: student perspectives on curriculum imperatives for universities in South Africa.* South African Review of Sociology, 43 (2), pp.58-75. DOI: 10.1080/21528586.2012.694243 [Accessed 12 Mar. 2025].
10. Mbah, M. (2019). *Can local knowledge make the difference? Rethinking universities' community engagement and prospect for sustainable community development*. The Journal of Environmental Education, 50 (1), pp.11-22. DOI: 10.1080/00958964.2018.1462136 [Accessed 19 Mar. 2025].
11. Woronkowicz, J. (2018). *Community Engagement and Cultural Building Projects*. The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society, 48 (1), 32-43. DOI: 10.1080/10632921.2017.1366962 [Accessed 16 Mar. 2025].
12. Yet, M., Manuel, P., DeVidi, M. & MacDonald, B. H. (2022). *Learning from Experience: Lessons from Community-based Engagement for Improving Participatory Marine Spatial Planning*. Planning Practice & Research, 37 (2), pp.189-212. DOI: 10.1080/02697459.2021.2017101 [Accessed 12 Mar. 2025].

UDC: 37.015.3:316.64(474.2)
https://doi.org/10.54481/ecosoen.2025.1.09

THE BACKGROUND OF PISA RESEARCH AND A SOCIAL PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

CONTEXTUL CERCETĂRILOR PISA ÎNTR-O ABORDARE PEDAGOGICO-SOCIALĂ

LEINO Mare, PhD, Associate Professor
School of Governance, Law and Society, Tallinn University, Estonia
ROR: https://ror.org/05mey9k78
Institutional E-mail: tlu@tlu.ee
ORCID: 0000-0003-4894-2753
Personal E-mail: mare.leino@tlu.ee

Annotation: *In the 2022 PISA assessment, Estonia ranked fourth worldwide (after Japan, Singapore, and South Korea) and first in Europe. However, despite these high academic results, students in Estonia are not happy: only 25% of basic school students are satisfied with their institution (Roomets, 2023). According to the PISA study, Estonia's decline in wellbeing ratings is among the largest – nearly 20% – and the country also reports higher rates of bullying among 15-year-olds than the OECD average (Valk, Soo, & Beilmann, 2023).*

The central question of this article addresses a paradox: How do unhappy students achieve such good academic results? Are they unhappy because of academic pressure, and/or do they view education merely as a ticket to a better future rather than a value in itself? Could the explanation lie in the value system, traditions, or in the hope of achieving greater competence in life?

The situation is even more complex because teachers in Estonia are also generally dissatisfied, particularly with their salaries – teachers across the country went on strike in January 2024. The empirical basis of this article relies on secondary data analysis: the author examines PISA reports and national research on wellbeing in general education conducted by the Ministry of Education and Science of Estonia. Social pedagogy is considered as one possible approach to addressing (or preventing) student unhappiness.

Adnotare: *În evaluarea PISA 2022, Estonia s-a clasat pe locul patru la nivel mondial (după Japonia, Singapore și Coreea de Sud) și pe primul loc în Europa. Cu toate acestea, în pofida acestor performanțe academice ridicate, elevii din Estonia nu sunt fericiți: doar 25% dintre elevii din ciclul gimnazial sunt mulțumiți de instituția lor (Roomets, 2023). Potrivit studiului PISA, scăderea nivelului de bunăstare al elevilor estonieni este una dintre cele mai mari – aproape 20% – iar țara raportează, de asemenea, rate ale bullyingului în rândul elevilor de 15 ani mai ridicate decât media OECD (Valk, Soo & Beilmann, 2023).*

Întrebarea centrală a articolului abordează un paradox: cum reușesc elevii nefericiți să obțină rezultate academice atât de bune? Sunt ei nefericiți din cauza presiunii academice și/sau privesc educația doar ca pe un bilet către un viitor mai bun, și nu ca pe o valoare în sine? Ar putea explicația să se afle în sistemul de valori, în tradiții sau în aspirația de a dobândi competențe de viață mai solide?

Situația este și mai complexă deoarece și cadrele didactice din Estonia sunt, în general, nemulțumite, în special față de salarii – profesorii din toată țara au intrat în grevă în ianuarie 2024. Baza empirică a articolului se sprijină pe analiza secundară a datelor: autorul examinează rapoartele PISA și cercetările naționale privind bunăstarea în educația generală, realizate de Ministerul Educației și Științei din Estonia. Pedagogia socială este analizată ca o posibilă abordare pentru gestionarea (sau prevenirea) nefericirii elevilor.

Keywords: *PISA research, democracy, neoliberalism, social pedagogy.*
Cuvinte-cheie: *cercetare PISA; democrație; neoliberalism; pedagogie socială.*

Conflict of interest
The author declares that there is no conflict of interest
Article received: 15.04.2025
Accepted for publication: 06.06.2025
Published: 27.06.2025

Conflict de interese
Autorul declară că nu are niciun conflict de interese.
Articol primit: 15.04.2025
Acceptat pentru publicare: 06.06.2025
Publicat: 27.06.2025

© Leino Mare, 2025

Introduction

Introduction and theoretical background

In the 2022 PISA research, Estonia had the fourth place in the world, right after Japan, Singapore, and South Korea, and the first place in Europe. But despite the high academic position, students in Estonia are not happy: only 25% of basic school students are pleased with their educational institution (Roomets, 2023). Compared to other countries, Estonia's decline in wellbeing ratings (according to PISA) is one of the largest – nearly 20%. Estonia also has more bullying among 15-year-olds than OECD countries on average (Valk, Soo, & Beilmann, 2023). The focus of this article is a paradox: how do unhappy students get good study results? Are they unhappy because of hard study, and/or do they consider education only as a ticket to a better future, not as an aim in itself? Could the answer be found in the value system, traditions, and/or in the hope of coping better with life in general? The teachers in Estonia are not happy either: they complain about the small salary – in January 2024 there was a teachers' strike in Estonia, all over the country, but without any significant results.

The empirical data come from secondary data analysis: the author analyses the PISA results and the research about wellbeing in general education, organized by the Ministry of Science and Education in Estonia (Lutsoja, Matina, & Rebane, 2021). Social pedagogy comes into the picture as one possible solution (or prevention) to the unhappiness of students. The theme is actual and important, because the academic study results in Estonia are not as good anymore as they used to be – compared to the previous PISA in 2018, for example. There are also some new problems in Estonia: worsened relations between students and teachers, and the growing role of the socioeconomic background – students from poorer families have weaker study results, according to PISA statistics (Täht & Konstabel, 2023). In a democratic country, possibilities should be equal, but in reality it seems not to be the case. Does it mean a weaker democracy?

Education is the only field where people can influence their lives significantly: higher education may give better opportunities in the labour market. To enter a good university, high marks in general education are needed. This probably explains the high position in the PISA research. But it seems to be quite a neoliberal explanation if education is only a tool for something, not a value itself. Apple summarizes: democracy and education are reduced to the simple notion of choice in the education marketplace, in which parents and their children make decisions about where they will get the best return on their investment. This is particularly visible in the influence of corporate interests, such as those which "provide for-profit education in the form of ventures such as online charter schools, marketed to parents as a more democratic, personalised and accessible educational opportunity for their children" (Riddle, 2022, p. 5). According to Marling (2022), Estonia is strongly a neoliberal country: in policy, the pure market economy is idealized, as well as free competition, a thin state, and achievements measured in money. As W. Brown has stressed, neoliberalism is not only a theory of economy anymore, but has been percolating into all fields of life, also into education and even private life. For example, somebody thinks to invest in herself/himself by going to the gym or taking some educational training. People sometimes name it quality time. If neoliberalism enters the person, s/he starts to consider herself/himself as human capital, the value of which needs to be raised all the time, or at least kept at the same level. Neoliberalism can also be noticed behind self-help, weight watchers, meditation, and many other commercial self-development trends. The problem is not in those practices, but in the idea/demand that people feel they must start to change/develop themselves (to raise their value). Instead, people could/should ask whether the society around them needs to be changed. According to Marling, this kind of pressure is stressful: "the so-called normal neoliberal person worries all the time whether s/he has invested enough in herself/himself to create a good product for the labour market, for a partner, for the future, etc." (Marling & Põldsam, 2022;

Jylhämö, 2022). According to Riddle (2022), neoliberalism works to ensure a thin, marketed, and commodified version of democracy, which promotes possessive individualism and competition rather than a fuller democracy that enables collective participation and critical engagement with society's institutions and public decision-making apparatuses. While liberty and equality have always been understood as necessary elements of democracy, contemporary neoliberal formations have skewed democracy, according to Szolucha, "towards a particular understanding of individual liberty at the expense of social equality" (Riddle, 2022). And here Marling (2022) adds that as neoliberalism is dominant in Estonian society, the strong orientation toward capital also influences people's values and behaviour. Especially during economic depression, the need to be better all the time is quite stressful. Additionally, as the nature of our society creates the need to belong to fixed rules, exceptions may receive negative attention (Marling & Põldsam, 2022).

Obviously, the content of democracy has changed, at least in practice. Riddle (2022) wrote that democratic education is not interested in the simple maintenance of the status quo, but rather in the active reconfiguration of society to be more inclusive and embracing of all, especially those who are marginalized and disenfranchised.

However, as Carr maintained, "the problem is not that democracy is not a worthy concept but, rather, that the type of democracy that has received normative, relativistic salience is, in many regards, anti-democratic". Riddle stresses the thoughts of Rancière and Apple, who wrote that contemporary liberal democracies act as little more than fronts for corporate oligarchies and massified individualistic consumerism, in which the thick version of democracy gives way to a commodified thin version of democracy writ small as choice – whether via an electoral experience that provides little, if any, differentiation between political candidates, or market-driven product consumption and individual competition, which leaves little time for the consideration of public life and its concerns for the welfare of others (Riddle, 2022, p. 3).

This kind of neoliberalistic approach supports the hypothesis that Estonian students study hard because they hope to cope better in the labour market: an educated person is a product, a highly valued product. Happiness as a soft value is not obligatory in neoliberalism, where values are rather practical than moral. Pring wrote that values are a matter of taste or are relative to particular social conditions (Pring, 1984, p. 6). In the context of values, one may have in mind either the beliefs concerning desirable modes of conduct or desirable end-states of existence. Rokeach wrote that one refers to these two kinds of values as instrumental or terminal values. There are also two kinds of terminal values – personal and social – and two kinds of instrumental values: moral and competence values (Rokeach, 1973, pp. 7–8). Dewey believed that things cannot be judged to be good in themselves; they must always be understood in the context of means–ends relations (Yadav, 2023). According to the historian and sociologist Max Weber, modern societies have developed a new system of rationalisation in which the practical application of knowledge is used to achieve specific desired ends. The term *technical rationality* is often used interchangeably with *instrumental rationality* and linked to the concept of calculative reason (Webb, 2006, p. 21). According to Rokeach, one terminal value may be instrumental to another terminal value, or one instrumental value may be instrumental to another instrumental value (Rokeach, 1973, p. 12). But, as Rønnow-Rasmussen wrote, just as "quicksilver" does not refer to a kind of silver, "instrumental value" may not refer to a kind of value at all (Rønnow-Rasmussen, 2002).

The same can be valid with many concepts. For example, the word *democracy* sounds promising, but according to Connell, democracy is reduced to the possessive individualism of the citizen as consumer, which has implications for de-racing, de-classing, and de-gendering issues of injustice and inequality, which are reframed as neoliberalism recasts education as "human capital formation", through which students learn the skills and attitudes to be productive members of a globalized workforce, which produces increasing profits for the market economy (Riddle, 2022).

Hardworking students and neoliberalism match together, but why do underpaid pedagogues teach so hard? As background information, one more aspect should be presented here: the high age of teachers in Estonia. Many young pedagogues left the workplace (at school) after the first salary already (Arula, 2023). And after three years of working at school, 30% of young pedagogues left the profession (Arvisto, 2022), because of too many non-academic tasks compared to a small salary. The result is that the average age of pedagogues is high: according to statistics, in most schools the average age of educators is over 50 years. In nine schools in Estonia, at least 50% of pedagogues are over 60 years old (Ladva, 2023). According to Vaher and Selliov (2019), during the last decade the number of pedagogues who decide not to work at schools anymore is about 13% a year. And in 13% of schools, the number of leavers is even 24%. This aspect influences study results directly: lack of stability cannot support the quality of education (Vaher & Selliov, 2019). Still – in the PISA research the academic results are good, which is not logical.

As one research question was: how do underpaid pedagogues teach well? The possible answer may be that older teachers do not have much other choice anymore. Even a small salary is better than nothing, and if they want to keep the position, they do the best they can. Usually, work experience also brings better results, which helps to keep the position.

Materials and methods of research

The empirical data come from the secondary analysis of statistics found on the Internet. In 2021, the Ministry of Education and Research of Estonia organized an electronic survey for 4th, 8th, and 11th grade students, teachers, and parents across the country (on the LimeSurvey platform). From the 4th grade, 73.9% of students responded; from the 8th grade, 66.9%; and from the 11th grade, 66.7%. Among all teachers, almost 50% participated in the survey (their average age was 49.4 years). The number of participating parents was 25,370 (Lutsoja, Matina, & Rebane, 2021). In this article, I focused on the results concerning the psychological situation.

Results and considerations

According to the authors of this survey, two aspects are important: a high level of exhaustion (because of academic pressure and tasks that are too difficult) and cynicism (because of time pressure, overload, and lack of resources), especially in the 8th and 11th grades. Both aspects hinder studying. Here, *cynicism* refers to doubts about the meaning of education, boredom, and a lack of interest in learning. Satisfaction with developmental feedback is lower than in the previous PISA cycle: students need more recognition than they receive (Lutsoja, Matina, & Rebane, 2021, p. 24).

Students with special needs are more frustrated with most aspects investigated in this survey. The biggest difference (in wellbeing, compared to students without special needs) appears among 8th-grade students (15–16 years old). Self-efficacy is also lower in the group of students with special needs, while exhaustion and cynicism are higher. *Self-efficacy* is a practically important concept, as it refers to the individual's belief in their capacity to execute behaviours necessary to produce specific performance outcomes. It reflects confidence in one's ability to exert control over motivation, behaviour, and the social environment.

Some selected results from the research (Lutsoja, Matina, & Rebane, 2021, p. 30):

1. When parents have limited financial resources, the level of wellbeing is lower at school (in all grades), and exhaustion/cynicism are higher.
2. Teachers' wellbeing and job satisfaction correlate mainly with the school's image, autonomy, relationships with students, and feedback from the principal.
3. Teachers are dissatisfied with the prestige of the profession, school finances, and collaboration with colleagues (co-teaching). However, as they get older, their satisfaction increases each year.

4. The sense of autonomy and self-efficacy has decreased across all age groups (compared to the previous PISA).
5. The highest levels of cynicism and exhaustion, and the lowest satisfaction, are found in grade 8 (15–16-year-olds), and this problematic trend has been the longest. The expert of the Ministry of Education and Science explains it through the general scepticism of teenagers (Lutsoja, Matina, & Rebane, 2021, pp. 30–31, 48–49, 78). However, since the age group is the same in other OECD countries, the scepticism of Estonian teenagers must have a local cause.

The leader of the Students' Union of Estonia, A. M. Tamm, suggests looking at the bigger picture: *"It is important to analyse the culture of the school!"* For example, attitudes toward school depend on the level of bullying – both the ministry and the student union are aware of this problem. Tamm also suggests analysing the role of students: *Are they like small ants who must be in the right place every day, or could they be considered human beings who can improve school life, who are heard and seen?* He continues: *"It is interesting to note that in schools where the student council is supported (also financially), satisfaction with the institution is much higher".* (Roomets, 2023).

The considerations

Obviously, stronger democracy supports wellbeing in schools, but neoliberalism is a challenge for democracy. As stated earlier, students in Estonia may study hard because education is perceived as a safety belt for the future, and/or young people simply do not trust the country's social security system: if unemployment benefits are too small, it is better to remain employed. This opinion seems partly true, as Estonia's GDP per capita is equivalent to only 86% of the world average, which is worse, for example, than in Spain or Portugal. In Estonia, the average salary of teachers in 2024 was 1,986 EUR, and the median national salary was only 1,501 EUR (Statistics Estonia, n.d.). According to the Bank of Estonia, in 2021, 5% of inhabitants owned 46% of all assets in the country, while 50% of the population owned only 7% of assets. The rich are richer; the poor are poorer.

Comparison with the Nordic countries provides an additional perspective: in Norway, for example, GDP per capita is 625% of the world average. Norway's economy has grown at an average annual rate of 1.4% over the past four years and is ranked the 12th largest economy in Europe, ahead of Austria (World Economics, n.d.). But in the PISA ranking, Norway is only in 32nd place, below the international average. The performance of Norwegian students has dropped significantly since 2018 (Norwell, 2023). This fact supports the idea of a connection between study motivation and financial security: in wealthy countries, people can cope even if they are not academically very successful. This statement requires further analysis, of course, but the neoliberal, permanent pressure to increase one's value on the labour market supports the idea of the instrumental value of education.

Estonia is not the only case in this context. According to international statistics, the best academic results for the lowest salaries are found mainly in Eastern Europe: in Estonia and Poland (Arenguseire Keskus, 2023). It seems that the East–West mentality gap matters. Robson (2017) wrote that from the broad differences between East and West to subtle variations between U.S. states, it is increasingly clear that history, geography, and culture can shape the way we think in subtle and surprising ways – even down to visual perception. Our thinking may have been influenced by the types of crops our ancestors farmed, and a single river can mark the boundary between two different cognitive styles. Our "social orientation" appears to spill over into more fundamental aspects of reasoning (Robson, 2017).

In the context of PISA, this theory may yield interesting insights. For example, in Estonia, the first schools were founded in the 13th century, and the first published books arrived in 1470 (Vaher & Selliov, 2019). Education has always been important here, serving as a lifebelt for a small nation – as noted earlier. Historically, schools have had several functions beyond transmitting knowledge. After child labour was prohibited in many countries in the 19th century, parents had to work harder to compensate for the lost income, since their children no longer worked. They worked longer hours,

meaning children remained unsupervised for longer periods. Establishing a network of schools helped solve an unwanted by-product of the industrial revolution: the potential criminal activity of underage, unsupervised youth. Thus, the function of school education at that time was manifold (or instrumental): the newly educated generation also proved to be better factory workers than those without schooling. The social developments of the 19th century brought new problems, which were transferred to schools and the teaching profession. Even today, dedicated teachers compensate for unfinished responsibilities of both the state and families (Leino, 2012).

When the influence of the church decreased in many countries in the 19th century, schools had to take over the task of socializing the younger generation. In some languages (for example, Estonian), the same word is used for "teacher" and "vicar": the pedagogue was as important as God. This reflects the high expectations placed on both professions – especially regarding discipline, guidance, and socialization. This historical background of responsibility and high expectations may also explain why underpaid teachers in Estonia continue to teach students well. Here social pedagogy becomes relevant, as it supports general education in many ways: a social pedagogue helps students stay in school despite negative emotions and helps teachers cope with problematic situations in the classroom.

A social pedagogical discussion

As culture influences everything, it also shapes the system of values that we learn from childhood onward (Leino, 2009). Neoliberal values are likewise learned, not innate. Education is part of socialization: a form of proactivity for a better future – a tool for achieving something beneficial. Bierhoff (2002) stresses that social behaviour can, in general, be partly traced back to social values: prosocial behaviour at the individual level and solidarity at the societal level. Prosocial behaviour, as motivated behaviour, is a function of both person and situation. It may also be based on a mixture of egoistically and altruistically motivated sources (Bierhoff, 2002, pp. 1, 3, 10). Prosocial behaviour serves as a form of prevention to avoid social problems in the future, and here the value system plays a significant role. In short, education as an activity is also a form of proactivity, and values education as well. Packham (2024) argues that values education is necessary for the traditional goal of educating people to live in a harmonious society. Values accompany everything automatically: what one does or does not do is shaped by personal values. Through social pedagogy, it is possible to influence values, attitudes, and ways of thinking.

Social pedagogy can be translated or explained as teaching for coping with life in society, or as the social aspect of teaching. According to Eriksson and Winman (2010), if "social" is understood as something shared (including culture) and "pedagogy" as learning, then social pedagogy involves supporting people in their development toward becoming independent participants in a democratic society. Clearly, social pedagogy can also soften neoliberal influences. It is a tool for understanding societal changes in the evaluation of individuals, in order to offer them the opportunities (or education) needed to change their current situation. Social pedagogy is part of various social practices and is used as an intellectual tool for thinking, development, mobilisation, and learning (Eriksson & Winman, 2010). Hämäläinen (2012) wrote that social pedagogy does not have methods of its own that can be distinguished from pedagogical methods in general. In the context of the empirical data used for this article, this refers to activities aimed at counteracting cynicism and exhaustion. Social pedagogy employs several educational and activating tools for this purpose. For example, Nyqvist (1997) emphasises empowerment, which in this context refers to improving situations – making life more comfortable for people: reducing cynicism and exhaustion. For Storø (2013), social-pedagogical practice means a visible intervention in people's daily lives to support development, participation, and learning. This is the point at which academic pedagogy meets humanistic social pedagogy, and the process is connected to local cultural norms. For example, social pedagogical intervention includes specific methods against bullying. Cynicism can be mitigated through programmes designed to cultivate empathy. Exhaustion requires more complex treatment, because it is already a long-term

process, as the general education curriculum in Estonia is demanding – even teachers complain about it. It is important to discuss the academic content of each subject – what constitutes the minimum required knowledge of the curriculum. There is no need to be maximalist everywhere, because life has multiple dimensions to consider.

According to McCready (2001, p. 16), "the things that happen to us – especially anything as remote as the moral decisions of strangers or the policies of governments – seem to have little lasting effect on how we feel. More strongly correlated with happiness than anything else is personality: how easily you find it to enjoy other people's company, or how easily you are bothered by life's irritations. We are affected by good or bad luck, but after getting used to a change of luck, we all seem to have our own natural level of happiness to which we return, more or less. The factors in our environment that make the biggest lasting difference are ones that depend on us – we become happier by forming successful relationships, finding our work interesting, or doing something really satisfying as a leisure pursuit". A social pedagogue can help in this context: if a student studies hard and becomes exhausted, this is only an emotion, and it does not last forever. Sadness may even be useful; young people should be aware of the richness of every feeling. With a well-developed emotional vocabulary, it is easier to notice and analyse the inner world of a person.

Theoretical knowledge about the role of single feelings, moods, and emotions in general – in the context of behaviour and environment – should be part of general education and social pedagogy. For example, according to Kahneman, a good mood makes us more likely to accept our first impressions as true without challenging them. Thus, people who are in a good mood are more likely to allow biases to influence their thinking. You are not the same person at all times. As your mood varies, some features of your cognitive machinery vary with it. In short, you are *noisy*. Many incidental factors induce occasional noise in judgments. Among the extraneous factors that should not influence professional judgments but do, two prime suspects are stress and fatigue (Kahneman, Sibony, & Sunstein, 2021, pp. 87, 89). Researchers generally advise not to rush, because the next day your mood may be entirely different. And a social pedagogue can explain this in a preventive context: sadness and unhappiness are not always bad – it is possible to use these emotions in a constructive way, with professional guidance, of course.

Conclusions

Historically, teaching and learning have been highly valued in Estonia: education has always functioned as a kind of lifebelt for a small nation – a ticket to a better future. This attitude fits with the (neo)liberal approach: a student is viewed as a product for the labour market, and a teacher as a tool for achieving this; education is not the aim in itself but an instrument for coping in society – at least in theory.

The empirical data come from secondary data analyses of studies conducted by the Ministry of Education and Science of Estonia. According to these studies, only one-third of students in gymnasiums, and even fewer – one quarter – in basic schools are satisfied with their school. One explanation could be the inevitable criticism typical of this age, but there is no reason why youth in Estonia should be more critical than their peers in other countries. Satisfaction with school has also declined due to bullying and minimal involvement of students in school organisation (Roomets, 2023).

The messages of this research:

1. Education in Estonia is the best in Europe (according to the 2022 PISA results);
2. This means that Estonian teachers must also be among the best;
3. Yet students in Estonia are not happy: wellbeing has worsened compared to the 2018 PISA cycle;
4. There is considerable cynicism, exhaustion, and bullying among students in general education;

5. Students also find their studies meaningless;
6. Teachers in Estonia are unhappy due to low salaries: pedagogues went on strike nationwide in January 2024 (without significant results);
7. The age of teachers in Estonia is high – many young teachers leave the school system within the first three years;
8. Job satisfaction is higher among older teachers: it seems that experience provides a certain immunity to school-related problems.

On 10 November 2023, there was a warning strike across Estonia. As the government did not respond as expected, the official strike began in January 2024. This was unsuccessful, as teachers' salaries increased by only 4.1% (Mändveer, 2024). Compared to the excellent PISA results, the idea of a strike forms an interesting combination – it requires deeper investigation, as it is tied to broader attitudes toward education. Undoubtedly, students sense teachers' emotions, and if these emotions do not support learning, new problems may arise.

The unhappiness of students may also be connected to neoliberalism. According to Jylhämö (2022), within capitalism people focus excessively on the future: tomorrow life must always be richer, better, more pleasant. A consumerist society requires imagination; without fantasies, development stops. In capitalism, one must constantly create something new to avoid loss. This resembles the digital world: each new phone model must be better, and if development stops, one risks falling out of the market. Open possibilities matter more than fixed realities. This could even be described as a "society of promises". Tomorrow must be better than today – but the problem is that people stop valuing the richness of today. And so, happiness becomes difficult.

Jylhämö (2022) summarises: the world today differs greatly from 100 years ago, when people saw themselves primarily as tools of God. Now, a different kind of commitment appears: as activities must be permanently effective, people focus on themselves – on designing a better, nicer, more competitive product for the labour market. Self-help and therapy have become central elements of development and self-rehabilitation. Never before have so many books on self-improvement and therapy existed to support people's self-control (Jylhämö, 2022, pp. 93–94, 116). Or, as Margaret Thatcher famously said: *before, people wanted to do something; now they want to be somebody.*

Continuous tuning and adjustment of the self are central to neoliberalism. No wonder it is difficult to be happy if happiness is always somewhere else – if the dominant concept is *"not yet"* and there is always *"room for improvement"*.

Values present in society shape values everywhere – both in institutions and in private life. According to the empirical data, despite high PISA results, serious problems exist in general education. High PISA scores are not the issue, nor are hardworking teachers. The problematic signals relate to the high levels of exhaustion and cynicism among students, the stronger influence of socioeconomic background, the frustration of students with special needs, deteriorating student–teacher relations, and weaker collaboration among teachers. These issues are highlighted in the data from the Ministry of Education and Science. So far, there are no comprehensive strategies or national plans for improvement. Marling and Põldsam emphasize that there is still insufficient public discussion about neoliberal problems (Marling & Põldsam, 2022).

In the social field, processes take time, and in the social sciences every detail matters. Students' emotions are as important as their grades – perhaps even more important – because they shape attitudes toward the future, and the future itself. In this context, social pedagogy can offer preventive approaches that may soften or even avoid serious problems.

Bibliography

1. Arenguseire Keskus. (2023). *Õpetajate järelkasvu tulevik: Õpetajate töötasu (Lühiraport).* Available at: https://arenguseire.ee/raportid/opetajate-tootasu/ [Accessed 11 Mar. 2025].

2. Arula, E. (2023, November 10). *Streikiv õpetaja: noored õpetajad lahkuvad koolist esimese veerandi järel.* Tartu Postimees. Available at: https://tartu.postimees.ee/7894346/streikiv-opetaja-noored-opetajad-lahkuvad-koolist-esimese-veerandi-jarel [Accessed 13 Mar. 2025].
3. Arvisto, K. (2022, October 4). *Kuhu kaovad noored õpetajad?* Heateo Sihtasutus. Available at: https://heategu.ee/uudised/kuhu-kaovad-noored-opetajad [Accessed 13 Mar. 2025].
4. Bierhoff, H.-W. (2002). *Prosocial behaviour*. Taylor & Francis Group, Psychology Press. 304p.
5. Eriksson, L., & Winman, T. (2010). *Learning to fly.* Daidalos. 207p.
6. Hämäläinen, J. (2012). *Social pedagogical eyes in the midst of diverse understandings, conceptualisations and activities*. International Journal of Social Pedagogy, 1(1), pp.3–16.
7. Jylhämö, K. (2022). *Digi-askeesi*. Tampere: Vastapaino. 246p.
8. Kahneman, D., Sibony, O., & Sunstein, C. R. (2021). *Noise.* New York: Hachette Book Group. 454p.
9. Ladva, A. (2023, November 9). *Lahendus koolidele: Pensioniealised töötavad osakoormusega ja aitavad meid hädast välja. Õhtuleht.* Available at: https://www.ohtuleht.ee/1095375/lahendus-koolidele-pensioniealisedtootavad-osakoormusega-ja-aitavad-meid-hadast-valja [Accessed 19 Mar. 2025].
10. Leino, M. (2009). *The prosocial behaviour among students in Finland and in Estonia*. European Journal of Social Education, 16–17, pp.247–258.
11. Leino, M. (2012). *Social role of the teacher*. In K. Lyons (Ed.), Sage handbook of international social work, pp. 212–214. Sage Publications Ltd.
12. Lutsoja, K., Matina, J., & Rebane, M. (2021). Üldhariduskoolide 2021. aasta rahuloluküsitluste tulemused. Available at: https://harno.ee/sites/default/files/documents/2022-01/%C3%9Cldhariduskoolide%20rahulolu-%20ja%20koolikeskkonna%20k%C3%BCsitluste%20riiklik%20aruanne%202021.pdf[Accessed 12 Mar. 2025].
13. Marling, R., & Põldsam, R. (2022). *Neoliberalism ja normiühiskond kui stressiallikas*. Available at: https://maailmakeeled.ut.ee/et/sisu/neoliberalism-ja-normiuhiskond-kui-stressiallikas [Accessed 16 Mar. 2025].
14. McCready, S. (2001). *In pursuit of happiness.* In S. McCready (Ed.), The discovery of happiness, pp.10–23. Sourcebooks.
15. Mändveer, M. (2024, February 6). *Õpetajad ei streikinud ainult palga pärast*. Õpetajate Leht. Available at: https://opleht.ee/2024/02/opetajad-ei-streikinud-ainult-palga-parast/ [Accessed 23 Mar. 2025].
16. Norwell, F. (2023, December 6). *What the PISA world education rankings tell us about schools in Norway*. Available at: https://www.thelocal.no/20231206/what-the-pisa-report-tells-us-about-schools-in-norway [Accessed 19 Mar. 2025].
17. Nyqvist, L. (1997). *Sosiaalipedagogiikka ja sosiaalityö*. In Suomalaista sosiaalipedagogiikkaa kehittämässä, pp. 30–36.
18. Packham, R. G. (2024). *The importance of values education*. Routledge. Available at: https://www.routledge.com/blog/article/the-importance-of-values-education [Accessed 27 Mar. 2025].
19. Pring, R. (1984). *Personal and social education in the curriculum*. Hodder and Stoughton.
20. Riddle, S. (2022). *Democracy and education*. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/364320120_Democracy_and_Education [Accessed 09 Mar. 2025].
21. Robson, D. (2017, January 18). *How East and West think in profoundly different ways.* BBC Future. Available at: https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20170118-how-east-and-west-think-in-profoundly-different-ways [Accessed 19 Mar. 2025].
22. Rokeach, M. (1973). *The nature of human values*. New York: The Free Press. 438p.
23. Rønnow-Rasmussen, T. (2002). *Instrumental values – strong and weak.* Ethical Theory and Moral Practice, 5(1), 23–43. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/226641797_Instrumental_Values_-_Strong_and_Weak [Accessed 29 Mar. 2025].
24. Roomets, K. (2023). *Vaid veerand põhikooli lõpuklasside õpilastest on oma kooliga rahul.* Available at: https://www.err.ee/1609041791/vaid-veerand-pohikooli-lopuklasside-opilastest-on-oma-kooliga-rahul [Accessed 19 Mar. 2025].

25. Statistics Estonia. (n.d.). *Average monthly gross wages and salaries*. Available at: https://stat.ee/en/find-statistics/statistics-theme/work-life/wages-and-salaries-and-labour-costs/average-monthly-gross-wages-and-salaries [Accessed 23 Mar. 2025].
26. Storø, J. (2013). *Practical social pedagogy*. Bristol: The Policy Press. 176p.
27. Täht, K., & Konstabel, K. (2023, December 22). *Kuidas tunnevad meie 15aastased õpilased end koolis? Sirp*. Available at: https://www.sirp.ee/s1-artiklid/c21-teadus/kuidas-tunnevad-meie-15aastased-opilased-end-koolis/ [Accessed 09 Mar. 2025].
28. Vaher, K., & Selliov, R. (2019). *Üldhariduskoolide õpetajaskonna tööalane liikuvus ja karjääriteed EHISe andmetel.* Haridus- ja Teadusministeerium. Available at: https://vaimuvara.ee/kooliharidus-eestis-labi-aegad/ [Accessed 19 Mar. 2025].
29. Valk, A., Soo, K., & Beilmann, M. (2023). *Vaimne tervis ja heaolu õpikeskkonnas*. M. Sisaks (Ed.), Eesti inimarengu aruanne 2023, pp. 197–209. SA Eesti Koostöökogu. Available at: https://inimareng.ee/ [Accessed 19 Mar. 2025].
30. Webb, S. (2006). *Social work in a risk society.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. 256p.
31. World Economics. (n.d.). Norway GDP per capita: Gross domestic product per capita (real PPP in 2021 prices). Available at: https://www.worldeconomics.com/GrossDomesticProduct/Real-GDP-Per-Capita-PPP/Norway.aspx [Accessed 19 Mar. 2025].
32. Yadav, S. (2023). Available at: *Instrumental values: 10 examples and definition.* Available at: https://helpfulprofessor.com/instrumental-values-examples/ [Accessed 29 Mar. 2025].

UDC 159.942.2:316.72
https://doi.org/10.54481/ecosoen.2025.1.10

FROM BABY BOOMERS TO GENERATION Z: A PSYCHOSOCIAL INTERGENERATIONAL ANALYSIS OF HAPPINESS

FERICIREA DE LA BABY BOOMERS LA GENERAȚIA Z: O ANALIZĂ PSIHOSOCIALĂ INTERGENERAȚIONALĂ

RUSNAC Svetlana, PhD in Psychology, Associate Professor
Free International University of Moldova
Faculty of Social and Educational Sciences
Chisinau, Republic of Moldova
ROR: https://ror.org/054jx1t36
Institutional E-mail: ulim@ulim.md
ORCID ID: 0000-0001-8846-0201
Personal E-mail: srusnac@ulim.md

RUSNAC Svetlana, doctor în psihologie, conferențiar universitar
Universitatea Liberă Internațională din Moldova
Facultatea Științe Sociale și ale Educației
Chișinău, Republica Moldova
ROR: https://ror.org/054jx1t36
E-mail instituțional: ulim@ulim.md
ORCID ID: 0000-0001-8846-0201
E-mail personal: srusnac@ulim.md

Annotation: *The study examines the social representation of happiness across four generations in the Republic of Moldova – Generation Z, Millennials (Y), Generation X, and Baby Boomers – using the free evocation method and Vergès' prototypical (structural) analysis. A stable transgenerational central core emerged, organized around three recurrent dimensions: family, health, and peace. Intergenerational differences were located primarily in the contrast zone and the periphery, reflecting distinct formative experiences and socio-historical contexts.*

Generation Z articulates a hybrid representation combining traditional and experiential elements; Millennials display a predominantly eudaimonic profile centered on balance, satisfaction, and self-realization; Generation X emphasizes stability, responsibility, and functional well-being; Baby Boomers present the most consolidated axiological structure, marked by continuity, security, and transgenerational ties.

The comparative findings confirm the proposed hypotheses and align with international literature on generational patterns of happiness and well-being. Overall, happiness emerges as a socio-cultural indicator that mirrors both traditional value orientations and ongoing modernization processes. The study outlines theoretical and practical implications for developing generation-sensitive psychosocial interventions and policies promoting intergenerational well-being.

Adnotare: *Studiul examinează reprezentarea socială a fericirii la patru generații din Republica Moldova – Generația Z, Millennials (Y), Generația X și Baby Boomers – utilizând metoda evocărilor libere și analiza prototipică (structurală) elaborată de Vergès. A fost identificat un nucleu central transgenerațional stabil, organizat în jurul a trei dimensiuni recurente: familie, sănătate și pace. Diferențele intergenerașionale apar în special în zona contrastivă și în periferie, reflectând experiențe formative și contexte socio-istorice distincte.*

Generația Z conturează o reprezentare hibridă, care îmbină valori tradiționale cu elemente experiențiale; Millennials prezintă un profil predominant eudaimonic, axat pe echilibru, satisfacție și autorealizare; Generația X pune accentul pe stabilitate, responsabilitate și funcționare optimă; Baby Boomers manifestă cea mai consolidată structură axiologică, definită prin continuitate, securitate și relații transgenerașionale.

Analiza comparativă confirmă ipotezele formulate și se aliniază literaturii internaționale privind tiparele generașionale ale fericirii și bunăstării. Per ansamblu, fericirea apare ca un indicator socio-cultural,

care reflectă atât orientările valorice tradiționale, cât și procesele contemporane de modernizare. Studiul evidențiază implicații teoretice și practice pentru dezvoltarea unor intervenții psihosociale diferențiate generațional și pentru politici publice orientate spre bunăstare intergenerațională.

Keywords: *happiness; social representations; generations; well-being; central core; periphery; contrast zone; Republic of Moldova; intergenerational models; eudaimonia; hedonic; security; family; health.*
Cuvinte-cheie: *fericire; reprezentări sociale; generații; bunăstare; nucleu central; Republica Moldova; modele intergeneraționale; eudaimonic; hedonic; securitate; familie; sănătate.*

Conflict of interest
The author declares that there is no conflict of interest
Article received: 15.05.2025
Accepted for publication: 06.06.2025
Published: 27.06.2025

Conflict de interese
Autorul declară că nu are niciun conflict de interese.
Articol primit: 15.05.2025
Acceptat pentru publicare: 06.06.2025
Publicat: 27.06.2025

© Rusnac Svetlana, 2025

Introduction

Happiness, although traditionally a classic topic within psychology, has undergone substantial reinterpretation over the past decades through multiple theoretical lenses. While positive psychology has emphasized happiness as an individual and emotional resource (Diener et al., 2018; Seligman, 2011; Lyubomirsky, 2008), recent research highlights that it cannot be separated from the social, cultural, and historical contexts in which people live.

Within the framework of social representations theory (Moscovici, 2001; Jodelet, 1989), happiness functions as a collectively shared symbolic category that structures how individuals interpret personal well-being, interpersonal relations, and the meaning of existence. The literature underscores that social representations are socially constructed and shared systems of knowledge that integrate cognitive, evaluative, and normative dimensions (Rateau, Moliner, Guimelli, & Abric, 2012). A social representation does not merely describe "what people think", but also "why they think it", "how these meanings become legitimized", and "through which mechanisms they circulate within social groups". Accordingly, happiness can be understood not only as a subjective experience but as a cultural and symbolic product, transmitted intergenerationally and shaped by collective experiences, social norms, and historical contexts.

From this perspective, generations constitute privileged analytical units. In the classical interpretation developed by Karl Mannheim (1952), generations do not represent concrete social groups but rather categories united by a shared "location" within the historical structure of society. Unlike communal groups (e.g., family, tribe) or associative groups (e.g., formal organizations), members of the same generation are not connected through direct interaction, physical proximity, or explicit norms. What unites them is their participation in a common experiential horizon during a sensitive period of psychosocial formation – particularly adolescence and young adulthood (pp. 288–289). Mannheim emphasizes the structural rather than psychological nature of this unit: individuals may be more or less aware of their generational belonging, yet simultaneous exposure to the same historical events, emerging technologies, cultural models, or socio-economic crises produces shared symbolic and evaluative frameworks. These, in turn, shape values, social representations, and expectations regarding "the good life" (p. 289).

Viewed through this lens, generation becomes an essential analytical level for studying the social representation of happiness. If happiness is a psychosocial construct situated at the intersection of cultural norms and individual interpretations, then intergenerational differences do not merely reflect personal preferences but distinct ways of understanding the world and attributing meaning to experience – ways formed in different historical contexts. Generations socialized under conditions of stability tend to prioritize self-actualization, autonomy, and personal development, whereas those

shaped by political transitions, insecurity, or forced mobility often associate happiness with safety, family, and social cohesion.

Within this framework, the social representation of happiness becomes a product of shared historical location, transmitted and adapted intergenerationally through mechanisms that intertwine collective memory, socio-economic experiences, and the dynamics of social identities. Research on values and political cultures (Inglehart, 1997) likewise shows that axiological orientations are not randomly distributed; rather, they crystallize within cohorts that have internalized specific social conditions as *"normality"*.

Thus, each generation develops a particular way of understanding happiness, grounded in the historical, technological, and social context in which it was formed. Generations raised during periods of economic stability and expanding opportunities tend to define happiness in terms of self-actualization, autonomy, and the cultivation of individual potential. In contrast, those shaped by political transitions, economic uncertainty, or social conflict tend to anchor happiness in fundamental needs such as safety, family cohesion, and predictability (Twenge, 2017; Arnett, 2014).

Recent literature also highlights a marked differentiation in happiness styles across generations. Studies on digital generations (Twenge, 2017, 2023) show that young people raised in accelerated technological ecosystems often perceive happiness as fluid, immediate, and closely tied to rapid emotional self-regulation and constant online feedback. For these cohorts, happiness frequently takes on a hedonic structure – immediate satisfaction, entertainment, social validation, and intense emotional experiences (Graciyal & Viswam, 2021). In contrast, studies focusing on adult and older generations reveal a more stable and value-anchored perspective, in which happiness is associated with continuity, responsibility, security, and long-term relationships (Charles, 2010; Carstensen et al., 2011). With advancing age, happiness increasingly acquires an eudaimonic profile – meaning, internal coherence, and emotional balance – whereas younger generations predominantly define it through immediate positive emotions, opportunities, and self-realization.

Against this theoretical and socio-historical background, it becomes evident that happiness cannot be understood solely at the individual level but must be examined in relation to the *"generational ecologies"* in which people live and develop. Each generation possesses its own symbolic repertoire through which it organizes positive experiences, constructs expectations of *"the good life",* and defines what it means to be happy in a given epoch.

In the Republic of Moldova, the particularities of historical transitions – such as the shift from the Soviet system to a market economy, large-scale migration, accelerated digital transformations, and changes in family dynamics – have produced distinct psychosocial "imprints" for each cohort. These differences justify the need for an intergenerational analysis not only of self-reported levels of happiness but, more importantly, of the ways in which happiness is represented, interpreted, and valued by members of different generations.

Accordingly, this article aims to investigate the social representation of happiness across four generations – from Baby Boomers to Generation Z – and to highlight the differences shaped by the historical, cultural, and psychosocial context of each cohort. The analysis provides a comparative perspective on the ways happiness is conceptualized, evaluated, and experienced intergenerationally in contemporary Moldovan society.

Materials and methods of research

To investigate the social representation of happiness across the four generations, the study employed the free evocation method – one of the fundamental techniques of the structural approach within social representations theory, originally developed by Serge Moscovici and later elaborated by Jean-Claude Abric (1994) and Pierre Vergès (1992). The evoked data were subsequently examined using prototypical analysis, the procedure introduced by Vergès to identify the internal structure of a social representation. This method allows direct access to spontaneous associations and to the

meaningful contents automatically activated by an inducing stimulus, simultaneously capturing the cognitive and affective–evaluative dimensions of the representation.

Data Collection Procedure

Participants were asked to write down the first five words or expressions that came to mind when hearing the term "happiness". The instruction aimed to capture immediate, unfiltered evocations in order to access the spontaneous semantic core. Data were collected individually, both online (via Google Forms) and in written format, between October and December 2024.

Participants

The total sample consisted of **275 respondents**, distributed across four generations according to categorizations commonly used in contemporary psychosocial literature:

Generation	**Age range**	**N**	**%**
Generation Z	18–25 years	72	26.18%
Millennials (Y)	26–45 years	91	33.09%
Generation X	46–59 years	64	23.27%
Baby Boomers	60–74 years	48	17.45%

Inclusion criteria were: age corresponding to the cohort, informed consent, and the ability to complete the evocation task.

Data Processing

The analysis followed the structural model proposed by Abric (1994) and was operationalized through prototypical analysis, which is based on two main dimensions:

- the absolute frequency of each evoked term;
- the mean evocation rank (the position in the sequence of evocations).

The mean evocation rank indicates the order in which a term appears in the evocation list: a low rank (1–2) reflects high subjective importance and early placement, whereas a high rank (4–5) reflects lower importance. Thus, terms with high frequency and low mean rank constitute the central core, while inverse combinations make it possible to identify the first periphery, the contrast zone, and the second periphery.

Following the standard procedure of prototypical analysis (Vergès, 1992), these variables allow the delineation of the four zones of the representation:

- Central core – terms with high frequency and low mean rank; widely evoked and placed in the first positions, representing the most stable and normatively integrated elements of the representation.
- First periphery – terms with high frequency but high mean rank; frequently evoked but not placed early, indicating important elements not yet integrated into the core.
- Contrast zone – terms with low frequency but low mean rank; although rare, they appear in early positions and often reflect subgroup-specific or alternative meanings.
- Second periphery – terms with low frequency and high mean rank; rarely evoked and placed later, representing individual or situational variations of the representation.

The lexical treatment involved:

- normalization of vocabulary (spelling corrections, reduction of inflected forms);
- grouping of synonyms and closely related semantic variants;
- removal of idiosyncratic or irrelevant evocations;
- calculation of statistical indicators (frequency, mean rank, generational distribution).

This methodological framework enables comparison not only of the content but also of the **internal architecture** of the social representation of happiness across age groups – an essential dimension of intergenerational analysis.

Research Hypotheses

Based on the literature on intergenerational differences, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H1. The structural configuration of the social representation of happiness will differ significantly across generations, both at the level of the central core and within the periphery.

H2. Younger generations (Generation Z and Millennials) will evoke hedonic–experiential terms more frequently, whereas mature generations (Generation X and Baby Boomers) will privilege eudaimonic and relational elements.

H3. Happiness will exhibit a more stable anchoring in adult and older cohorts (a more compact central core), whereas Generation Z will display a more fragmented structure influenced by the socio-digital context.

H4. Terms associated with security and stability will appear more frequently among generations shaped by socio-economic transitions (Generation X and Baby Boomers).

H5. Terms related to autonomy, self-realization, and individual expressiveness will be more prevalent among Millennials, who were socialized within a culture of expanding opportunities.

Results: Prototypical Analysis and Structural Organization of the Social Representation of Happiness

Generation Z (n = 72)

The prototypical analysis of the social representation of happiness among Generation Z revealed 54 spontaneous associations, which were semantically consolidated into 25 relevant terms. Applying the minimum inclusion threshold (5%), 29 terms were retained for analysis. The distribution of frequencies and mean ranks allowed the identification of the structural organization of the representation according to the bidimensional model proposed by Vergès (1992). In line with standard conventions, C1–C4 refer to the four cells of the prototypical analysis table, corresponding respectively to the central core, first periphery, contrast zone, and second periphery.

	High subjective importance (low mean rank)	Low subjective importance (high mean rank)
High frequency	**C1: Central core** *family, health, love, peace, nature*	**C2: First periphery** *friends, freedom*
Low frequency	**C3: Contrast zone** *achievement, traveling, safety, work, fulfillment, good mood, goodness, sun, well-being, life, harmony, creativity, children, country*	**C4: Second periphery** *relaxation, motherhood, financial prosperity, parents, home, music, activity, husband*

Figure 1. Structural organization of the social representation of happiness – Generation Z

C1. Central core

High frequency (≥15%) and high subjective importance (low mean rank: 1–3):

- family (38; median = 2.39)
- health (24; median = 2.00)
- love (24; median = 2.83)
- peace (23; median = 2.22)
- nature (19; median = 2.89)

These elements constitute the gravitational center of the social representation of happiness for Generation Z. The configuration reveals a surprisingly stable and traditional central core, organized around close relationships, physical and emotional balance, pro-social values (peace), and connection to the natural environment. Despite their association with the digital ecosystem and individual autonomy, young respondents maintain a strong anchoring in the classical axiological repertoire.

C2. First periphery

High frequency but lower subjective importance (median > 3):

- friends (24; median = 3.54)
- freedom (24; median = 4.00)

Although frequently evoked, these terms do not appear in the earliest positions of the evocation sequence. This suggests that they are perceived as favourable conditions for happiness rather than as defining dimensions of it.

C3. Contrast zone

Low frequency but high subjective importance (median 1–3):

- achievement (10; median = 2.00)
- traveling (10; median = 2.80)
- safety (8; median = 2.75)
- work (8; median = 2.50)
- fulfillment (8; median = 2.88)
- good mood (8; median = 2.88)
- goodness (7; median = 2.86)
- sun (7; median = 2.86)
- well-being (7; median = 2.86)
- life (7; median = 1.57)
- harmony (6; median = 3.00)
- creativity (5; median = 2.60)
- children (4; median = 3.00)
- country (7; median = 3.00)

These elements reflect the existence of subgroup-specific orientations within Generation Z. Terms such as life and country suggest the presence of existential or civic connotations of happiness for part of the cohort, whereas achievement, work, and fulfillment point toward personal development orientations. Items such as sun, traveling, and creativity express hedonic–experiential dimensions characteristic of younger generations.

C4. Second periphery

Low frequency and low subjective importance (high mean rank):

- relaxation (10; median = 3.90)
- motherhood (10; median = 3.90)
- financial prosperity (9; median = 3.11)
- parents (9; median = 3.44)
- home (8; median = 3.38)
- music (7; median = 5.00)
- activity (6; median = 5.00)
- husband (4; median = 4.00)

The second periphery incorporates heterogeneous and less consolidated elements, forming a semantic space of diversity. A combination of traditional references (motherhood, home, husband) and contemporary cultural elements (music, activity, relaxation) can be observed. This suggests that the social representation is permeable to contextual influences and to emerging identities specific to Generation Z.

The profile of Generation Z reveals a complex and hybrid structure in the social representation of happiness, where traditional dimensions coexist with experiential, self-referential, and socially sensitive orientations. This generation constructs happiness along several dominant directions:

1. Centrality of close relationships and emotional well-being

The central core – composed of family, health, love, peace, and nature – indicates that, despite commonly held stereotypes about the digital generation, young people ground their conception of happiness in stable affective relationships and the need for psychological balance. Happiness is not

defined primarily through immediate rewards or social validation, but through authentic bonds and emotional stability.

2. Sensitivity to the social context and the need for security

The presence of peace in the central core, alongside safety and life in the contrast zone, suggests a generation deeply shaped by recent socio-political uncertainties (the pandemic, regional conflicts, economic crises). Happiness is perceived as attainable only under conditions of stability, protection, and communal harmony.

3. Valuing the natural environment and ecological orientation

The inclusion of nature in the central core constitutes a distinctive element, pointing to a heightened ecological consciousness and to the perception of the natural environment as a source of balance, meaning, and emotional self-regulation. This orientation mirrors global generational trends, with young people increasingly concerned about climate change and sustainable lifestyles.

4. Diversification of happiness styles and pluralization of meaning

The contrast zone gathers highly diverse terms – achievement, fulfillment, work, traveling, harmony, creativity – together with hedonic-experiential elements such as sun and good mood. This diversity signals the existence of distinct sub-narratives of happiness within the same generation: for some, happiness is personal progress; for others, exploration; and for yet another segment, emotional stability.

5. Happiness as a negotiated space between tradition and innovation

The semantic periphery (motherhood, home, parents, music, relaxation, activity) shows that Generation Z simultaneously integrates traditional cultural references and contemporary forms of expression. Happiness is experienced as a flexible and contextual construct, blending continuity values (family, home) with modern forms of personal expressiveness (music, creative engagement).

6. A predominantly polyphonic, rather than unitary, structure

Generation Z does not construct a monolithic representation of happiness. Instead, a polyphonic structure emerges in which: tradition coexists with exploration, security with moderated freedom, stability with experiential dynamism.

This heterogeneity reflects an adaptive orientation toward happiness, shaped by the accelerated pace of digital transformation, global uncertainty, and pressures related to self-realization.

Generation Y (Millennials): Prototypical Analysis and Interpretation

For Generation Y (Millennials) (n = 91), a total of 67 spontaneous evocations were recorded. After synonym unification and lexical normalization, 48 distinct terms were retained. Applying the 5% selection threshold, 27 relevant terms were identified, forming the extended content of the social representation of happiness for this cohort.

	High subjective importance (low mean rank)	Low subjective importance (high mean rank)
High frequency	**C1: Central core** *health, family, children, balance, peace, fulfillment, satisfaction*	**C2: First periphery** *love, financial prosperity, friends, achievement*
Low frequency	**C3: Contrast zone** *safety, husband (wife), respect, harmony, freedom, joy, motherhood*	**C4: Second periphery** *pleasure*

Figure 2. Structural organization of the social representation of happiness – Generation Y (Millennials)

C1. Central core

Terms meeting both criteria of high frequency (≥15%) and high subjective importance (median rank 1–3):

- health (44 mentions; median = 2.50)
- family (26; median = 2.08)
- children (24; median = 2.92)
- balance (24; median = 2.58)
- peace (16; median = 1.88)
- fulfillment (16; median = 2.25)
- satisfaction (14; median = 2.29)

The central core delineates a representation oriented toward inner stability, family harmony, and psychophysical well-being. The prominence of concepts such as health, balance, and satisfaction suggests an integrative model in which happiness is perceived as the result of aligning personal, family, and professional responsibilities – characteristic of a generation "double-anchored" between tradition and reflexive individualism.

C2. First periphery

High-frequency terms with lower subjective importance (median > 3):

- love (36; median = 3.50)
- financial prosperity (21; median = 3.10)
- friends (18; median = 3.22)
- achievement (16; median = 4.25)

These terms are important but not defining. They function as supporting elements, indicating that Millennials attribute an instrumental value to professional success, love, and friendships, without integrating them into the core of happiness. Financial prosperity is valued but not central, reflecting a balanced orientation between material and relational dimensions.

C3. Contrast zone

Less frequent terms but with high subjective importance (median 1–3):

- safety (12; median = 2.33)
- husband/wife (10; median = 2.80)
- respect (8; median = 2.50)
- harmony (6; median = 1.33)
- freedom (6; median = 1.33)
- joy (6; median = 2.67)
- motherhood (5; median = 1.60)

Although not highly frequent, these concepts carry significant axiological weight for internal subgroups: the need for protection, desires for autonomy, family roles, and emotional harmony are salient but not uniformly distributed elements of happiness. They reflect tensions specific to Millennials: the pressure for stability in an uncertain context, coexisting with aspirations for autonomy and self-affirmation.

C4. Second periphery

A single term:

- pleasure (6; median = 5.00)

The placement of pleasure in the peripheral zone confirms the cohort's orientation toward a predominantly eudaimonic model of happiness centred on meaning, balance, and self-realization rather than purely hedonic dimensions. Elements related to relaxation, nature, or recreation did not surpass the selection threshold.

The structure of the social representation of happiness in Generation Y reveals a strongly eudaimonic model in which emphasis is placed on balance, emotional stability, and the fulfillment of adult roles. Millennials, shaped by a socio-historical context marked by economic transitions,

professional uncertainty, migration, and performance pressures, define happiness as a synergy between personal well-being and family responsibilities.

1. Orientation toward security and stability

The predominance of health, family, children, balance, and peace in the central core shows that happiness is conceived as a state built through protection, predictability, and daily harmony. Millennials place physical, emotional, and family stability at the heart of their vision of the "good life", reflecting the tensions of the post-transition period in the Republic of Moldova, where economic uncertainty and professional mobility have strongly influenced expectations of well-being.

2. Happiness as balance between self and others

Terms such as fulfillment, satisfaction, and balance outline a mature approach to happiness, oriented toward self-coherence and alignment between personal values and social roles. For Millennials, happiness is not reducible to immediate positive emotions but represents the compatibility between personal life, family relationships, career, and aspirations for development.

3. Relational happiness – present but not defining

Although love, friends, and financial prosperity appear frequently, they are not central. They function as resources or facilitating conditions rather than core definers of happiness. Millennials value them, yet subordinate them to more stable dimensions such as health, security, and inner equilibrium – an important contrast with Generation Z, where these concepts have a more prominent status.

4. Family roles as sources of meaning

The presence of children, motherhood, and husband/wife in the central and contrast zones indicates that Millennials associate happiness with the fulfillment of family roles. Unlike Generation Z, for whom family roles may be secondary, Millennials preserve a more traditional interpretation of adulthood, in which establishing and consolidating a family represent core components of well-being.

5. The tension between autonomy and stability

Terms such as freedom, harmony, respect, and joy appear in the contrast zone, suggesting subgroups for whom happiness entails self-affirmation, emotional autonomy, and relational balance. This duality mirrors the structural dilemmas of Millennials: the need for stability coexists with aspirations for independence and expressive freedom.

6. Absence of a pronounced hedonic dimension

The isolated placement of pleasure in the peripheral zone confirms the generation's orientation toward a meaning-based, responsible, and stable conception of happiness. Compared to Generation Z, Millennials appear to adopt a more moderate view in which happiness is the result of a balanced and deliberate process rather than the pursuit of immediate gratification.

Social Representation of Happiness in Generation X (n = 64)

The social representation of happiness among Generation X (n = 64) outlines a distinct profile structured around values of stability, inner balance, and family continuity. Out of a total of 62 spontaneous evocations, semantic normalization resulted in 43 relevant terms, of which 32 met the minimum inclusion threshold of 5%.

C1. Central core

Terms simultaneously meeting the criteria of high frequency (≥ 15%) and high subjective importance (median rank 1–3):

- health (25 mentions; median = 1.40)
- peace (23; median = 2.83)
- family (19; median = 2.47)
- balance (19; median = 2.32)
- fulfillment (17; median = 2.59)
- well-being (12; median = 1.92)
- relaxation (11; median = 2.27)

This central core reflects a vision of happiness centred on harmony, emotional and physical stability, calm, and family continuity. In contrast to younger generations, the emphasis shifts toward happiness as regulation, recovery, and internal coherence – rather than dynamism or rapid expansion.

	High subjective importance (low mean rank)	Low subjective importance (high mean rank)
High frequency	**C1: Central core** *health, peace, family, balance, fulfillment, well-being, relaxation*	**C2: First periphery** *safety, children, harmony, faith*
Low frequency	**C3: Contrast zone** *comfort, patience, love, freedom, good cheer, usefulness, good mood*	***C4: Second periphery*** *traveling, financial prosperity (money), friends, satisfaction, empathy, nutrition, home, joy, work, achievement, activity, hug*

Figure 3. Structural organization of the social representation of happiness – Generation X

C2. First periphery

Frequent terms appearing in lower positions in the evocation list (median > 3):

- safety (21; median = 3.14)
- children (20; median = 3.50)
- harmony (13; median = 3.23)
- faith (11; median = 3.09)

These terms function as vectors of happiness without being defining pillars. The presence of faith is noteworthy: Generation X is the first cohort in which the spiritual dimension formally appears in the representation. Safety and children reflect the generational anchoring in consolidated family roles and the need for protection – typical of groups shaped by socio-economic transitions.

C3. Contrast zone

Less frequent terms but with high subjective importance (median rank 1–3):

- comfort (8; median = 2.75)
- patience (8; median = 2.63)
- love (6; median = 2.50)
- freedom (6; median = 2.00)
- good cheer (6; median = 2.67)
- usefulness (6; median = 2.50)
- good mood (3; median = 3.00)

Although infrequent, these elements signal subgroups for whom happiness involves emotional maturity, patience, calm, autonomy, and the feeling of being useful. This profile aligns with the personal and professional responsibilities characteristic of midlife.

C4. Second periphery

Low-frequency elements with low subjective importance:

- traveling (8; median = 3.25)
- financial prosperity (7; median = 4.29)
- friends (6; median = 3.33)
- respect (6; median = 4.17)
- satisfaction (6; median = 4.17)
- empathy (6; median = 3.33)
- nutrition (6; median = 4.17)

- home (5; median = 3.40)
- joy (5; median = 5.00)
- work (4; median = 5.00)
- achievement (3; median = 5.00)
- activity (3; median = 3.67)
- hug (3; median = 4.00)

These elements enrich the semantic field but do not shape the central structure. They indicate a form of happiness that is less hedonic and more connected to comfort, functionality, domestic stability, and moderate affective relations.

The profile of Generation X highlights a mature model of the social representation of happiness, anchored in experience, responsibility, and personal balance. For this cohort, happiness acquires a deeply pragmatic, stable, and continuity-oriented meaning, where the emotional component is moderated by adult life experience and consolidated social roles.

1. Inner balance and calm

The dominance of health, peace, relaxation, well-being, and balance in the central core indicates that happiness is conceived as a stable, calm, restorative state. Generation X privileges inner harmony, emotional regulation, and stress reduction – reflecting a mature way of relating to daily challenges. Happiness is not perceived as emotional intensity but as the maintenance of a functional and predictable rhythm of life.

2. Reaffirmation of family and relational roles

Terms such as family, children, harmony, and faith, located in the central core or first periphery, show that happiness is anchored in continuity, loyalty, and family responsibility. Happiness derives from the stability of close relationships and domestic cohesion rather than individualistic self-realization. Family ties function as sources of meaning and psychological protection.

3. Awareness of vulnerability and the valuing of health

Health is the strongest central element – a hallmark of this life stage, in which individuals become more aware of their physical and emotional fragility. Happiness is perceived as impossible without good health, reflecting the internalization of stress, responsibility, and self-care experiences.

4. Internalized ethics of patience and responsibility

Terms such as patience, usefulness, freedom, and good mood, found in the contrast zone, indicate a vision of happiness constructed through emotional self-regulation, discipline, and the assumption of social roles. Generation X appears to view happiness as the outcome of responsible life management – reflecting a form of psychosocial maturity typical of a generation raised in fluctuating socio-economic contexts and marked by transitions.

5. Diminished hedonic dimension

Elements associated with pleasure, intense joy, or rapid emotional experiences appear marginal or not at all, suggesting a decreased importance of hedonic components. Happiness is defined more as balanced functioning than affective intensity. Generation X is characterized by a measured, reflective model of happiness in which continuity, order, and meaning outweigh immediate gratification.

Social Representation of Happiness among Baby Boomers (n = 48)

The Baby Boomers (n = 48) display the most dense and stable structural configuration of the social representation of happiness among all the cohorts analysed. The 49 spontaneous evocations were reduced, after semantic unification, to 30 relevant terms, all of which exceeded the minimum inclusion threshold (≥ 5%). Of these, 11 terms are located in the central core – a strong indicator of axiological coherence and value consolidation in this generation.

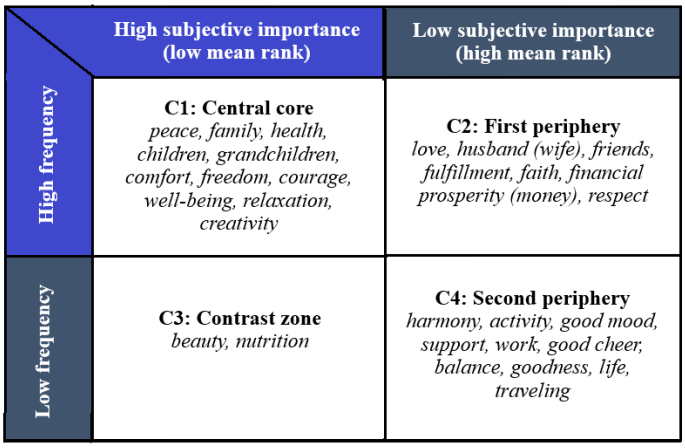

Figure 4. Structural organization of the social representation of happiness – Baby Boomers

C1 – Central core

High frequency (≥ 15%) and high subjective importance (median rank 1–3):

- peace (18; median = 2.83)
- family (17; median = 2.94)
- health (17; median = 2.18)
- children (17; median = 2.18)
- grandchildren (11; median = 2.55)
- comfort (10; median = 3.00)
- freedom (8; median = 2.88)
- courage (8; median = 1.75)
- well-being (7; median = 2.57)
- relaxation (7; median = 2.86)
- creativity (7; median = 2.43)

The central core of Baby Boomers outlines a conception of happiness grounded in stability, family continuity, health, and personal autonomy. The simultaneous presence of terms such as children–grandchildren together with values like freedom, comfort, and relaxation reflects a holistic vision in which happiness is perceived as a combination of protection, tranquility, family cohesion, and self-expression.

C2 – First periphery

High-frequency terms with lower subjective importance (median > 3):

- love (9; median = 3.11)
- husband/wife (9; median = 3.11)
- friends (8; median = 4.13)
- fulfillment (8; median = 3.25)
- faith (8; median = 3.38)
- financial prosperity (7; median = 3.86)
- respect (7; median = 3.14)

These elements carry significant emotional and social meaning, but they do not define the structural core. They function as complementary resources for happiness, with a contextual rather than normative role.

C3 – Contrast zone

Low frequency but high subjective importance (median rank 1–3):

- beauty (4; median = 2.75)
- nutrition (4; median = 2.75)

Although rare, these evocations occupy early positions and suggest the existence of subgroups for whom self-care, aesthetics, and physical well-being are meaningful components of happiness.

C4 – Second periphery

Low frequency and lower subjective importance (median > 3):

- harmony (6; median = 3.67)
- activity (6; median = 3.50)
- good mood (6; median = 3.33)
- support (6; median = 3.50)
- work (5; median = 5.00)
- good cheer (5; median = 3.60)
- balance (4; median = 3.25)
- goodness (4; median = 3.33)
- life (4; median = 4.00)
- traveling (3; median = 3.33)

The second periphery reveals a diverse semantic field that includes both traditional values (harmony, support) and elements associated with a moderately hedonic model. However, these dimensions do not shape the core representation but merely complement it with contextual nuances.

The representation of happiness among Baby Boomers is characterized by a stable, coherent structure strongly anchored in social and family continuity. The profile of this generation can be synthesized through several dominant features:

1. Happiness as security, peace, and inner order

Terms such as peace, health, comfort, and well-being indicate an orientation toward calm, balanced happiness defined by the absence of conflict, inner clarity, and physical and emotional stability. For this generation, happiness is first and foremost a state of stability and harmony.

2. The major importance of family ties

Family, children, and grandchildren occupy the centre of the representation – far more strongly than in younger generations. Happiness is perceived as a deeply relational, transgenerational space built through continuity, loyalty, and the fulfillment of family roles.

3. Autonomy and personal dignity

The presence of freedom and courage in the central core suggests a mature understanding of happiness, in which moral autonomy, self-efficacy, and the ability to overcome difficulties are fundamental components. Happiness is linked to maintaining personal dignity and living in accordance with one's own values.

4. Prioritization of comfort and well-being

Terms such as comfort, relaxation, and well-being reflect a life stage in which a balanced rhythm, quality time, and reduced strain become essential criteria of happiness. For Baby Boomers, happiness presupposes an adequate level of material and physical stability.

5. Diminished exploratory and hedonic dimensions

Elements such as traveling, activity, and good cheer appear in peripheral zones, indicating that happiness is not associated with exploration or intense emotions but with regularity, security, and the fulfillment of well-established roles.

6. A traditional yet integrative representation

The overall structure combines traditional values – family, faith, responsibility – with orientations related to individual comfort and personal autonomy. The result is a mature, stabilized conception in which happiness reflects both intergenerational continuity and the need for autonomy and tranquility.

Intergenerational Comparative Analysis of the Social Representations of Happiness

A cross-generational analysis of the four cohorts – Generation Z, Millennials (Y), Generation X, and Baby Boomers – shows that the social representation of happiness contains a recognisable

common structure alongside significant variations determined by age, socio-historical context, and the axiological orientations specific to each group. Vergès' bidimensional model enables the identification of differences both in the central core and across the ambiguous, contrastive, and peripheral zones, highlighting how the same social object – happiness – is configured differently depending on the formative experiences of each generation (Table 1).

Table 1. Social representation of happiness – intergenerational comparison

Cohort	C1: Central core	C2: First periphery	C3: Contrast zone	C4: Second periphery
Generation Z	family, health, love, peace, nature	friends, freedom	achievement, traveling, safety, work, fulfillment, good mood, goodness, sun, well-being, life, harmony, creativity, children, country	relaxation, motherhood, financial prosperity, parents, home, music, activity, spouse
Millennials (Y)	health, family, children, balance, peace, fulfillment, satisfaction	love, financial prosperity, friends, achievement	safety, husband/wife, respect, harmony, freedom, joy, motherhood	pleasure
Generation X	health, peace, family, balance, fulfillment, well-being, relaxation	safety, children, harmony, faith	comfort, patience, love, freedom, good cheer, usefulness, good mood	traveling, financial prosperity (money), friends, satisfaction, empathy, nutrition, home, joy, work, achievement, activity, hug
Baby Boomers	peace, family, health, children, grandchildren, comfort, freedom, courage, well-being, relaxation, creativity	love, husband/wife, friends, fulfillment, faith, financial prosperity (money), respect	beauty, nutrition	harmony, activity, good mood, support, work, good cheer, balance, goodness, life, traveling

A comparison of the four central cores reveals the existence of a robust symbolic base structured around three **transgenerational elements**: **family, health, and peace**. Their presence across all cohorts confirms their universal status, indicating that in Moldovan culture, happiness is primarily conceptualized as relational security, physical balance, and social tranquility.

However, each generation gives the central core its own distinct profile.

1. **Generation Z** retains traditional components (family, health, love, peace) but introduces nature, suggesting ecological sensitivity and a need for harmony in a world perceived as unstable. The structure is relatively concise yet emotionally diverse.

2. **Millennials** articulate a core oriented toward self-realization – besides health and family, they prioritize balance, fulfillment, and satisfaction, reflecting the internalization of personal development values and social mobility.

3. **Generation X** constructs a compact core dominated by well-being, relaxation, balance, and fulfillment, indicating a mature view of happiness shaped by emotional stability, stress regulation, and continuity.

4. **Baby Boomers** exhibit the most extensive central core (11 elements), where happiness is anchored in family continuity (children, grandchildren), safety, comfort, tranquility, and self-expression. The inclusion of creativity adds a contemplative, interiorized dimension of happiness.

Overall, the evolution of the central core across generations can be summarized as follows:

- Generation Z: short, diverse, affectively rich;
- Millennials: self-development oriented;
- Generation X: stable, functional, balanced;
- Baby Boomers: most coherent, traditional, and axiologically dense.

The First Periphery (Ambiguous Zone), comprising frequently evoked but lower-ranked terms, reflects the dynamics of transitional values and marks relevant generational differences.

1. **Generation Z** places here friends and freedom, which, although important to young people, are not perceived as defining dimensions of happiness – indicating a functional rather than a structural role.

2. **Millennials** present a dense ambiguous zone – love, financial prosperity, friends, achievement – indicating a tension between relational orientation and individual performance, characteristic of a generation situated "between two worlds".

3. **Generation X** includes traditional and existential values – safety, children, harmony, faith – important but non-defining elements that signal mature concerns related to continuity, morality, and meaning.

4. **Baby Boomers** show an extended ambiguous zone containing social and moral values – love, spouse, friends, fulfillment, faith, respect, money – illustrating a stratified, accumulated axiological complexity.

Across generations:

- younger people associate the ambiguous zone with autonomy and socialization values;
- adults include moral, spiritual, and family-oriented values;
- older adults display a rich, layered, integrative ambiguity.

The contrast zone highlights elements that are infrequently evoked yet hold high subjective importance – sensitive areas that reveal subgroups with distinct positions within the same generation.

1. Generation Z displays the greatest diversity in this zone: hedonic–experiential elements (traveling, sun), existential notions (life), growth-oriented terms (achievement, fulfillment), and stability-related concepts (safety, work). This dispersion indicates a representation that is still fluid and fragmented.

2. Millennials present a balanced C3, with terms such as safety, harmony, freedom, and joy, reflecting the dilemmas of a generation seeking continuity within a fluctuating social environment.

3. Generation X includes pragmatic notions – comfort, patience, usefulness, good cheer – which mirror the ethics of adult responsibility and an orientation toward functionality and self-regulation.

4. Baby Boomers evoke terms such as beauty and nutrition, indicating a conception of happiness centered on simplicity, aesthetics, and personal care, with little emphasis on exploration or intense emotional experience.

Thus, younger cohorts conceptualize happiness in experiential and emotional terms, adults in functional–moral terms, and older adults in somatic–aesthetic dimensions.

The second periphery captures elements most strongly influenced by context, lifestyle, and recent experiences.

1. Generation Z presents a mixture of traditional elements (parents, motherhood, home) and contemporary ones (music, activity), indicating the hybridization of digital culture with family-oriented values.

2. Millennials include a single peripheral term: pleasure – an unexpected result for a generation often stereotyped as hedonic. This suggests emotional regulation and a critical filtering of affective experiences.

3. Generation X shows a rich and varied periphery (nutrition, work, friends, home), reflecting multiple pressures and the fragmentation characteristic of adult life.

4. Baby Boomers include elements linked to meaning and continuity – harmony, life, traveling – suggesting an orientation toward reflection rather than accumulation.

The cross-generational comparison highlights four major patterns.

1. Transgenerational continuity. Family, health, and peace remain central core elements across all cohorts – indicating that happiness is structurally conceptualized as relational security.

2. Hedonic–eudaimonic polarization. Younger generations privilege experiential and emotional components; adults and older adults conceptualize happiness as stability, balance, and mature fulfillment.

3. Increasing salience of security with age. Terms such as safety, stability, and comfort progressively move toward the central core along the Z → Y → X → Baby Boomers axis.

4. Growing structural density. The representation is more fragmented among younger groups and becomes progressively more compact and coherent with age – Baby Boomers showing the most stable configuration.

The comparative analysis of the four cohorts – Generation Z, Millennials (Y), Generation X, and Baby Boomers – examines how the social representation of happiness is shaped differently depending on age, formative context, and the socio-cultural dynamics specific to the Republic of Moldova. Assessing the initial hypotheses allows for a nuanced understanding of these variations and of the mechanisms that generate them.

Hypothesis 1, according to which the structural configuration of the social representation of happiness differs significantly across generations, both at the level of the central core and within the peripheral zones, is confirmed. The data reveal systematic differences in the size and composition of the central core: Generation Z presents a small (5-item) but thematically diverse core; Millennials have a medium-sized core organized around self-realization; Generation X displays a coherent core structured around stability and balance; and Baby Boomers possess the most extensive core (11 items), with a pronounced traditional and family-oriented profile. The peripheral zones also vary consistently across cohorts, confirming that structural organization is deeply contingent upon each generation's historical and normative experiences.

Hypothesis 2, which posited that younger generations (Z and Millennials) would privilege hedonic–experiential terms, whereas mature generations would emphasize eudaimonic and relational elements, is partially confirmed. Generation Z frequently evokes experiential (e.g., sun, traveling) and emotional elements (good mood), alongside indicators of immediate positive affect. Millennials articulate both hedonic dimensions and notions related to autonomy and personal development (fulfillment, satisfaction). However, the central core of Generation Z remains surprisingly traditional – family, health, love, peace, nature – which reduces the strictly hedonic component of their representation. In contrast, Generation X and Baby Boomers clearly prioritize eudaimonic, relational, and axiological values (balance, well-being, faith, family continuity). Thus, the general direction of the hypothesis is validated, with the nuance that younger generations combine hedonic aspects with traditional values rather than replacing them.

Hypothesis 3, which predicted greater structural stability of the representation in adult and older cohorts and a more fragmented structure among Generation Z, is fully confirmed. Baby Boomers have the most extensive and coherent central core, reflecting a consolidated axiological system. Generation X exhibits a core oriented toward balance and functional everyday regulation. Millennials display an intermediate structure, shaped by the multiple responsibilities of early adulthood. Generation Z has the smallest central core and the most diverse contrast zone, confirming

the fluid and developing nature of their representation – typical for a generation exposed rapidly to cultural and digital shifts.

Hypothesis 4, stating that terms associated with security and stability would appear more frequently in generations marked by socio-economic transitions (Generation X and Baby Boomers), is confirmed. In Generation X, terms such as well-being, relaxation, balance, and health occupy central positions – clear indicators of a heightened need for stability. Among Baby Boomers, core elements such as comfort, relaxation, well-being, courage, and freedom reflect a need for psychological securitization after decades of historical transformations (post-war, Soviet, and post-1991 transition). In contrast, safety appears only as a contrast-zone element among Generation Z and remains secondary among Millennials. This gradient confirms the progressive embedding of security within the semantic core of cohorts formed in unstable contexts.

Hypothesis 5, which anticipated that terms related to autonomy, self-realization, and individual expressiveness would be more prevalent among Millennials, is likewise confirmed. Millennials are the only cohort that includes fulfillment, satisfaction, and balance (as self-regulation) in the central core, while achievement appears near the upper limit of the first periphery. This pattern reflects the culture of opportunity, performance, and personal development characteristic of the generation formed after the 1990s. In Generation Z, the terms achievement and fulfillment appear only in the contrast zone, suggesting an identity structure still in formation.

Overall, the analysis confirms that all hypotheses were fully or partially validated, and the intergenerational patterns align with international literature on value differences, lifestyle orientations, and social representations. Happiness emerges as a deeply socialized construct, sensitive to:

- the formative historical experiences of each cohort,
- the perceived level of socio-economic security,
- cultural and digital influences,
- the dynamics of family and professional responsibilities.

These findings show that happiness, beyond its psychological dimension, functions as a socio-cultural indicator, reflecting the broader transformations of contemporary Moldovan society and the generational differences in how meaning, well-being, and "the good life" are understood.

Discussion: Generational Patterns and Psychosocial Interpretation

The results allow the interpretation of the social representation of happiness in the Republic of Moldova through the lens of the interaction between historical conditions, socio-economic transition, and contemporary cultural transformations. The relatively stable structure of the central core – dominated by *family, health,* and *peace* – coexists with generational variations situated in the contrast and peripheral zones, where differences in lifestyle, values, and expectations become visible.

The generational configurations identified are consistent with Mannheim's classical view of generations as distinct "historical locations" shaped by shared formative experiences rather than concrete group memberships (Mannheim, 1952). The adult and older cohorts in the sample (Generation X and Baby Boomers) were socialized under the Soviet regime, during the era of planned economy, and later within the post-1991 transition characterized by economic uncertainty, massive migration, and the restructuring of welfare and social protection systems.

In this context, the strong emphasis on *security, comfort, well-being, relaxation, faith,* and *courage* in the structural organization of their social representation of happiness reflects a social memory of vulnerability: happiness is linked to protection from risk, material stability, and family cohesion. Studies from other post-socialist contexts (e.g., Russia, Ukraine, the Baltic states) report similar value orientations: generations raised under socialism and transitional instability tend to privilege security, tradition, and conformity, even when selectively adopting self-realization values (Inglehart & Baker, 2000).

In contrast, Millennials and Generation Z – socialized predominantly in a market-economy environment shaped by migration, digitalization, and increased circulation of Western cultural models – develop a more articulated vision of psycho-emotional balance, self-fulfillment, and personal satisfaction, while maintaining the traditional anchors of *family* and *health*. This "dual orientation" – toward relational security and personal development – is congruent with cross-cultural findings on generational values in societies undergoing accelerated modernization (Inglehart, 1997; Arnett, 2014).

A gradual shift emerges across the four cohorts, from *collective-survival happiness* toward *personalized-reflexive happiness*.

Among Baby Boomers, happiness is tightly linked to family continuity and transgenerational ties: *children, grandchildren, spouse, comfort, well-being, relaxation*. Their extensive central core suggests a sedimented representation combining traditional values (family, faith) with the desire for peace and stability after turbulent historical periods. Similar patterns have been observed in other post-communist countries, where older adults define happiness in terms of social security, stable relationships, and a sense of "a quiet life" (Steptoe et al., 2015).

Generation X appears as a "bridge generation": happiness is anchored in *health, balance, well-being,* and *relaxation*, yet also incorporates notions reflecting the ethics of responsibility and social usefulness (*usefulness, patience, work*). This profile aligns with the literature on midlife well-being, which highlights increased concerns about health, caregiving obligations, and financial stability, combined with the need for meaning and biographical coherence (Lachman, 2015).

Millennials most clearly express the shift toward a eudaimonic-reflexive model of happiness: *fulfillment, satisfaction, balance, opportunities,* and *appreciation*. They appear to integrate the global discourse on personal development, autonomy, and self-management – hallmarks of neoliberal cultures of performance (Cabanas & Illouz, 2019) – while still grounding happiness in family and health.

For Generation Z, happiness blends the traditional core (*family, health, love, peace*) with experiential elements (*traveling, sun, activity, music*) and ecological or safety-related concerns (*nature, security*). This hybrid structure suggests that, in a Moldovan context marked by migration, regional instability, and intense exposure to global cultural models, young people oscillate between continuity of family values and the search for new forms of expressiveness and exploration.

The evolution of the concept of happiness in this post-Soviet context may therefore be seen as an ongoing shift from happiness defined by "having and surviving" toward happiness defined by "becoming and self-actualizing" – without the former dimensions disappearing. The social representation remains stratified: older layers (security, family, peace) coexist with newer ones (autonomy, inner balance, experience).

The social representation of happiness among Generation Z and Millennials cannot be separated from the digital ecosystem and technology-mediated lifestyles. Recent studies show that intensive social media use can shape both aspirations and the social comparison standards through which young people evaluate their happiness (Twenge, 2017; Twenge, 2023). Research on the relationship between social media and emotional well-being indicates that young people often associate happiness with immediate, shareable experiences, high-intensity positive emotions, and rapid social validation, although this hedonic orientation is ambivalent – capable of both enhancing and eroding well-being depending on usage patterns and emotion-regulation strategies (Graciyal & Viswam, 2021; Valkenburg et al., 2022).

In our data, this influence is reflected primarily in the contrast and peripheral zones – *traveling, sun, music, activity, good mood, pleasure*. However, the fact that these elements do not become central suggests that for young people in this sample, happiness is not reduced to the logic of instant gratification; it remains anchored in close relationships, health, and safety. In other words,

contemporary lifestyles introduce an experiential and aesthetic layer into the representation of happiness, but do not replace the familial or axiological core.

Moreover, the regional context – pandemic, the nearby war, hybrid aggression affecting the Republic of Moldova, economic precarity, and migration – may account for the simultaneous presence of terms such as *peace, safety,* and *country* alongside those signalling mobility (*traveling*) and exploration. Young people appear to construct a negotiated understanding of happiness, oscillating between the desire to move outward and the need to belong, between the local and the global – an observation consistent with studies on Eastern European youth describing "pendular identities" between external mobility and family anchoring (Robila, 2014).

The results broadly align with international research on age and cohort differences in defining happiness and well-being. Longitudinal studies show that as people age, they tend to emphasize close relationships, health, and emotional stability – patterns consistent with the profiles of Generation X and Baby Boomers in our sample (Carstensen et al., 2011; Charles, 2010). Research among young adults highlights a stronger presence of hedonic, individualistic, opportunity-oriented dimensions, as well as increased emotional vulnerability within digital contexts (Lyubomirsky, 2008; Twenge, 2017). In our data, this tendency appears in peripheral and contrast-zone elements, not in the central core, possibly reflecting a cultural effect: in the Republic of Moldova, traditional anchors (family, health) remain central even for digital-native generations.

From the perspective of social representations theory, the recurrence of the same three elements – *family, health,* and *peace* – in the central core of all cohorts suggests the existence of a relatively stable cultural matrix that structures the meaning of happiness in the Moldovan social space. Differentiating elements shift toward the periphery, where generationally specific experiences are integrated (Moscovici, 2001; Rateau et al., 2012).

The results also illustrate the distinction between hedonic happiness (positive emotions, pleasure, comfort) and eudaimonic happiness (meaning, accomplishment, optimal functioning), well documented in recent scholarship (Diener et al., 2018; Huta & Waterman, 2014). Generation Z and Millennials articulate hedonic–experiential components more clearly, while Generation X and Baby Boomers anchor happiness in eudaimonic dimensions (*fulfillment, stable well-being, courage, faith, responsibility*).

Overall, the study shows that the social representation of happiness in the Republic of Moldova is simultaneously conservative and changing: conservative through the persistence of a strong relational-security core, and changing through the diversification of peripheral layers that gradually integrate global discourses on autonomy, experience, and self-realization. This profile is characteristic of societies "in-between worlds" – between the memory of a collectivist regime, the lived experience of transition, and the aspiration toward Western models of well-being.

Conclusions

This study examined the social representation of happiness across four generations in the Republic of Moldova – Generation Z, Millennials (Y), Generation X, and Baby Boomers – using the free evocation method and the structural (prototypical) model proposed by Vergès. The findings show that happiness is simultaneously a personal construct and a cultural product shaped by the socio-historical experiences specific to each cohort.

Across all generations, the *central core* is organized around the same three dimensions: *family, health, and peace*. Their recurrence indicates a stable value axis shared within Moldovan society, where happiness is primarily understood as relational and physical security. The persistence of these elements confirms the collectivist character of the local culture and the central role of close relationships in defining well-being.

Intergenerational differences emerge in the zones that reflect distinct lifestyles and formative experiences:

1) Generation Z combines traditional values with experiential and aesthetic elements, forming a hybrid, still-developing representation;
2) Millennials prioritize eudaimonic dimensions (fulfillment, satisfaction, balance), reflecting the internalization of global discourses on personal development;
3) Generation X associates happiness with stability, efficient functioning, and responsibility – hallmarks of social maturity;
4) Baby Boomers emphasize continuity, tranquility, transgenerational ties, and comfort.

With increasing age, the central core becomes denser and more coherent, while the peripheral zone narrows. Baby Boomers display the most stable structural configuration, whereas Generation Z has the smallest central core and the most diverse contrast zone. Thus, the representation of happiness matures alongside the life cycle and the accumulation of social experience.

Happiness reflects the cultural patterns of Moldovan society: mature generations frequently evoke security (comfort, balance, safety); post-transition cohorts value autonomy and personal achievement; digital generations combine the traditional with the aesthetic and experiential. Happiness therefore functions as a socio-cultural barometer, mirroring historical transformations and the ways in which they shape people's priorities.

Theoretical Implications

The study confirms the relevance of the structural model of social representations for analyzing intergenerational differences. The central core preserves cultural stability, while the periphery captures adaptation to social, technological, and economic change. The results contribute to scholarship in post-Soviet contexts, illustrating how transition, modernization, and digitalization reshape collective meanings of well-being.

Practical Implications

The conclusions may inform:

- generation-specific psychosocial programs (e.g., emotional-development interventions for youth; health and balance support for adults),
- public policies for intergenerational well-being (mental health, family policies, community initiatives),
- educational and counseling practices tailored to the developmental and social profiles of each age group.

Limitations

Although generationally diverse, the sample does not allow for national generalizations, as it is predominantly urban and of medium-to-high educational level. The internal demographic structure of cohorts was not fully balanced, and differences related to gender, socio-economic status, religiosity, or region were not analyzed. The free evocation method, while suitable for accessing spontaneous content, captures only part of the complexity of lived experiences and may be influenced by communication style or immediate context. Representations may reflect both stable cultural structures and reactions to the contemporary socio-political climate. The cross-sectional design does not allow separation of age, cohort, or period effects.

Future Research Directions

Future studies should consider:

- mixed-method approaches (quantitative + qualitative),
- analyses differentiated by gender, socio-economic status, and region,
- longitudinal investigations tracking changes in the social representation of happiness amid recent socio-political transformations.

Bibliography

1. Abric, J.-C. (1994). *L'organisation interne des représentations sociales: Système central et système périphérique*. In C. Guimelli (Ed.), Structures et transformations des représentations sociales, pp. 73–84. Lausanne: Delachaux et Niestlé.

2. Arnett, J. J. (2014). *Emerging adulthood: The winding road from the late teens through the twenties (2nd ed.).* Oxford University Press. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199929382.001.0001 [Accessed 20 Mar. 2025].
3. Cabanas, E., & Illouz, E. (2019). *Manufacturing happy citizens: How the science and industry of happiness control our lives.* Cambridge: Polity Press. 240p.
4. Carstensen, L. L., Turan, B., Scheibe, S., Ram, N., Ersner-Hershfield, H., Samanez-Larkin, G. R., Brooks, K. P., & Nesselroade, J. R. (2011). *Emotional experience improves with age: Evidence based on over 10 years of experience sampling.* Psychology and Aging, 26(1), pp.21–33. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1037/a0021285 [Accessed 27 Mar. 2025].
5. Charles, S. T. (2010). *Strength and vulnerability integration: A model of emotional well-being across adulthood.* Psychological Bulletin, 136(6), pp.1068–1091. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1037/a0021232 [Accessed 11 Mar. 2025].
6. Diener, E., Oishi, S., & Tay, L. (2018). *Advances in subjective well-being research*. Nature Human Behaviour, 2(4), pp.253–260. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-018-0307-6 [Accessed 07 Mar. 2025].
7. Graciyal, G., & Viswam, D. (2021). *Social media and emotional well-being: Pursuit of happiness or pleasure?* Asia Pacific Media Educator, 31(1), pp.99–115. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/1326365X211003737 [Accessed 16 Mar. 2025].
8. Huta, V., & Waterman, A. S. (2014). *Eudaimonia and its distinction from hedonia: Developing a classification and terminology for understanding conceptual and operational definitions*. Journal of Happiness Studies: An Interdisciplinary Forum on Subjective Well-Being, 15(6), pp.1425–1456. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-013-9485-0 [Accessed 23 Mar. 2025].
9. Inglehart, R. (1997). *Modernization and postmodernization: Cultural, economic, and political change in 43 societies.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 440p.
10. Inglehart, R., & Baker, W. E. (2000). *Modernization, cultural change, and the persistence of traditional values.* American Sociological Review, 65(1), pp.19–51. Available at: https://doi.org/10.2307/2657288 [Accessed 16 Mar. 2025].
11. Jodelet, D. (1989). *Les représentations sociales. Presses Universitaires de France.* Available at: https://imaginariosyrepresentaciones.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/d-jodelet-representationssocia_1.pdf [Accessed 18 Mar. 2025].
12. Lachman, M. E. (2015). *Mind the gap in the middle: A call to study midlife*. Research in Human Development, 12(3–4), pp.327–334. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/15427609.2015.1068048 [Accessed 16 Mar. 2025].
13. Lyubomirsky, S. (2008). *The how of happiness: A scientific approach to getting the life you want*. New York: Penguin Press. 384p.
14. Mannheim, K. (1952). *Essays on the sociology of knowledge. Routledge & Kegan Paul.* Available at: https://ia801905.us.archive.org/10/items/essaysonsociolog00mann/essaysonsociolog00mann.pdf [Accessed 09 Mar. 2025].
15. Moscovici, S. (2001). *Why a theory of social representations?* In K. Deaux, and G. Philogène (eds), Representations of the Social, pp. 8–36. Oxford: Blackwell.
16. Rateau, P., Moliner, P., Guimelli, C., & Abric, J.-C. (2012). *Social representation theory*. In P. A. M. Van Lange, A. W. Kruglanski, & E. T. Higgins (Eds.), Handbook of theories of social psychology, pp. 477–497. Sage Publications Ltd. Available at: https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446249222.n50 [Accessed 16 Mar. 2025].
17. Robila, M. (Ed.). (2014). *Handbook of family policies across the globe.* Springer. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-6771-7 [Accessed 20 Mar. 2025].
18. Seligman, M. E. P. (2011). Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being. New York: Free Press. 368p.
19. Steptoe, A., Deaton, A., & Stone, A. A. (2015). *Subjective wellbeing, health, and ageing*. The Lancet, 385(9968), pp.640–648. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(13)61489-0 [Accessed 20 Mar. 2025].
20. Twenge, J. M. (2017). *iGen: Why today's super-connected kids are growing up less rebellious, more tolerant, less happy – and completely unprepared for adulthood.* New York: Atria Books. 352p.

21. Twenge, J. M. (2023). *Generations: The real differences between Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, Boomers, and Silents – and what they mean for America's future.* Atria Books. Available at: https://doi.org/10.56315/PSCF12-23Twenge [Accessed 16 Mar. 2025].
22. Valkenburg, P. M., Meier, A., & Beyens, I. (2022). *Social media use and its impact on adolescent mental health: An umbrella review of the evidence.* Current Opinion in Psychology, 44, 58–68. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2021.08.017 [Accessed 20 Mar. 2025].
23. Vergès, P. (1992). *L'évocation de l'argent: Une méthode pour la définition du noyau central d'une représentation.* Bulletin de Psychologie, 45(405), 203–209. https://www.persee.fr/doc/bupsy_0007-4403_1992_num_45_405_14128

EcoSoEn
Economic and Social Sciences
SCIENTIFC JOURNAL

EcoSoEn
Științe Economice și Sociale
REVISTA ȘTIINȚIFICĂ

Year 7, Issue 1
Anul 7, Nr.1

ISSN 2587-344X
E-ISSN 25870425X

Submitted materials that do not meet the requirements are not reviewed and not returned to the authors.
Editorial is not responsible for the content of published articles.
Materialele prezentate care nu corespund cerințelor înaintate nu se recenzează și nu se restituie autorilor.
Redacţia nu este responsabilă pentru conţinutul articolelor publicate.

Bun de tipar: 27.06.2025
Tirajul: 100 ex.
Format A4
Coli editoriale: 10.42 Coli de tipar: 7.07
Tipar *Digital.* Hîrtie ofset. Garnitura *Times New Roman*

Ready for print: 27 June 2025
Print run: 100 copies
Format: A4
Editorial sheets: 10.42 Printing sheets: 7.07
Digital printing. Offset paper. Times New Roman typeface.

TIPOGRAFIA PRINT-CARO
Printed by: *Tipografia PRINT-CARO*

ISSN 2587-344X
E-ISSN 2587-425X
9 772587 344006 >

©„EcoSoEn", Year 7, Issue 1